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PRINCESSES LADIES & REPUBLICAINES OF THE TERROR

BY

THÉRÈSE LOUIS LATOUR

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TO

THE DEAR MEMORY

OF THE BEST OF HUSBANDS

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK. BECAUSE HE WOKE IN ME THE DESIRE TO WRITE THE STORY OF THE WOMEN OF THE PAST WHO CAPTURED MY INTEREST, HE STILL WATCHES OVER ME BEYOND THE TOMB. THE WORK THAT HE ADVISED ME TO TAKE UP UNITES US IN THOUGHT AND HELPS ME TO BEAR MY GREAT SORROW.

THÉRÈSE LOUIS LATOUR.

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PREFACE

I do not believe in prefaces. I have never believed in them ; in my opinion, they serve no useful purpose. Neither do I like them. If they often testify to an excess of modesty in the author for whom they are written, may they not also reveal an ample conceit in the writer of the preface itself? Nevertheless, it has fallen to my lot to contribute more than one, and in spite of my resolution not to succumb again I find myself transgressing.

I am forced to make this confession since the fact is patent. But I have no regrets, as the responsibility lies elsewhere. Madame Latour is to blame. She has honoured me with the request for these few lines. I have not the right to refuse in face of the claims that her modesty will not allow her to put forward, but with which I have long been familiar : the undoubted sincerity of her work, the truthful quality of her historical sketches, her long and devoted service in irradiating the outside world with the spirit of France, her whole life, in short, of honest labour.

Many years have gone by since she first set out to depict French society as it existed in the past and as it exists to-day. She has focussed her attention, moreover, on the essential element, the very core of this society—the French-woman. She does not study her in the abstract, coldly, conventionally, and, as is often the case, tediously. She aspires to portray her in her most representative types and the result is a portrait gallery rich in works of the choicest kind.

What a sheaf of rare flowers, delicate and vivid in hue, she offers us to-day !

Let us walk with her along the via dolorosa *trod by Marie-Antoinette who, as woman, wife and mother wore upon her heart a triple crown of thorns. After reading*

Madame Latour we shall see this unhappy queen henceforth only as one who met superhuman trials with haughty dignity and an incomparable loftiness of soul.

The average Frenchman has a habit of visualising the Princesse de Lamballe as a white face crowned with golden hair affixed to a pike dripping with blood. But how interesting, nevertheless, is the life, so storm-tossed, and later so tragic, of this sweet Savoyard princess who knew happiness but for one brief fortnight. The emotion roused in her by the handsome young page of Montereau is treated in the style of a Lancret or a Watteau.

Another palette is used to paint the figures of Charlotte Corday, all too strong in her virginity and, in sharp contrast, Théroigne de Méricourt, a figure in crude and violent colours thrown up by the eddies of the Revolution from the miry lower depths of society.

When Thérèsia Cabarrus obtained her divorce, the husband, whom she left and so quickly forgot, exclaimed: "It is in vain, she will always be Madame Tallien"; history has proved him right. Nevertheless, it is curious to note that the erstwhile naked queen of fêtes given by Barras with Ouvrard's gold, died as the Princesse de Caraman-Chimay, a professed Christian, loving wife and devoted mother.

I should reproach myself were I to continue to rob these living portraits of their first freshness. The reader will be well advised not to linger over this superfluous preface, but forthwith to begin the book, for in its pages he will find instruction, pathos, charm.

JOSEPH BARTHÉLEMY,
Académie des sciences morales.

PRINCESSES, LADIES AND REPUBLICAN WOMEN OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

MARIE-ANTOINETTE: UNHAPPY QUEEN

Marie-Antoinette, who arrived in France in 1770 dazzling in her youth, health and high spirits, was already in 1789 a woman to inspire pity ; wasted, pallid, sorrowful and aged, although she was not yet thirty-three. Royalty had been her bane. The young queen did not understand the exacting duties that it imposed. Carried away by the exuberance of her spirits, she thought at first that she could enjoy herself to her heart's content so long as she was good and kind to everyone. She was ignorant of the discontent and heavy obligations bequeathed to his successors by the selfish reign of Louis XV.

So, between this young sovereign who wanted to do good, but did not know how to set about it, and the people who only saw her through her extravagances and blunders, there arose a misunderstanding which grew worse with each day and was intensified by all the misfortunes of the age.

The waste at court, the unfortunate choice of ministers, the deficit which had to be admitted, were laid by the people at Marie-Antoinette's door. They even came to insult her with the name of Madam Deficit. They thought

that if Louis XVI had not married "the Austrian", as they were fond of calling the queen, France would not now be on the eve of bankruptcy. So there was complete misunderstanding between the nation and the queen. But it would be absurd to go so far as to believe that Marie-Antoinette ever uttered the phrase attributed to her by certain of her enemies, a phrase that could only be cynical or idiotic. These enemies declared that she replied to those who said that the French had no bread: "Well, let them eat cake." Marie-Antoinette certainly never said anything either remotely or nearly resembling this foolish phrase.

But the people detested her as much as though she had said it. Hate gathered against her: her most innocent acts were wrongly interpreted. The most varied and numerous crimes were imputed to her. It seemed as though these unhappy people, suffering from miseries for which they blamed her, sought to make her atone for the happiness which she had enjoyed, the glory she had known, the fascination she had exercised. That is why Marie-Antoinette suffered more during the Revolution than any other member of the royal family; that is why the hatred with which she was surrounded was the most bitter, the most sanguinary, the most active.

Already in the spring of 1786 the crowd's terrible aversion to the queen was plainly shown by the ovation it gave, after their acquittal, to Cardinal de Rohan and the enigmatical Cagliostro, whom Marie-Antoinette accused of seeking to smirch her honour by their falsehoods and behaviour. This lawsuit, so famous the world over that it has been called "the case of the queen's necklace", was, said Mirabeau, "the prelude to the Revolution". The queen was extremely unhappy about it, and as a result lost her spirits and became a victim to insomnia.

But it was not until the 5th of October, 1789, that the malcontents sought for the first time to make a direct and definite attack against the queen. She was accused

of having three days previously, at a banquet of the bodyguard at Versailles, worn the white cockade of the *émigrés* and of having gone so far as to trample under foot the tricolour cockade. The Paris mob, incited, certainly, by agents of the Duc d'Orléans, who wanted to dethrone his cousin in order to wear the crown himself, and suffering also from misery and hunger, allowed themselves to be swept along with General La Fayette and his National Guard, to Versailles to demand satisfaction from the king and queen for all that was amiss in Paris. The initiative of this march was taken by the women of the Market, who were joined by numbers of their sex, political enthusiasts caught by the new ideas that were to play a very active part between 1789 and 1795. Passions were so inflamed that the strength of each was more than doubled and this wild, uncontrolled crowd, starving and unaided, nevertheless managed to drag several cannons from Paris to Versailles.

Immediately they arrived at the royal palace, it was the queen they demanded to see, the queen they wanted to punish. Marie-Antoinette only escaped with her life by leaving her apartments half-clothed and taking refuge with the king by a private staircase. The malcontents, baulked in their hatred of the queen, revenged themselves by beheading several of the bodyguard, those whom they thought she liked the best. When the parleys between the delegates of this ragged horde and Louis XVI decided the king to return to Paris with all his family, it was still the queen who was the most bitterly reviled by these wild enthusiasts and their admirers who pressed round the royal carriage. Not only was Marie-Antoinette addressed by the epithet of "the bakeress", just as Louis and the little dauphin were called "the baker" and "baker's boy", but these women and men thee'd and thou'd her, asked her questions, tried to touch her garments, her jewels, and to whisper in her ear all the evil they thought of her.

The torture lasted half a day, for it was not until six

o'clock in the evening that the painful procession reached Paris.

The royal family was installed in the Tuileries. There, everything was mournful, cold and inhospitable, recalling the past disasters of royalty, for the palace had remained unoccupied since the troubles of the Fronde during the minority of Louis XIV.

At the Tuileries the royal family knew neither privacy nor liberty. It was General La Fayette who was master in the palace, and not Louis XVI. A constant and meticulous supervision was exercised by the soldiers of the National Guard over each member of the royal family, particularly over the queen. Worse still, the women of Paris, who now looked on the queen as their property, crowded in the morning beneath her windows and insisted that she should answer their numerous questions. On the 7th of October, the day after the arrival of the royal family at the Tuileries, the " Ladies of the Market " demanded that Marie-Antoinette should show herself to them bare-headed. On another occasion they told her that to love courtiers was not to love the French and that it was the French that she ought to love. " I loved them at Versailles, I shall love them just the same in Paris," replied the queen. Then these women tried to lead her to betray herself by speaking to her in German. " I no longer understand German," said Marie-Antoinette, " I have become such a good Frenchwoman."

This reply did not disarm her enemies, who, one morning, tried to break into her room. But they got no farther than Madame Elizabeth's apartment, which was situated below that of Marie-Antoinette. Parisian deputations were even organised, composed entirely of men who went to the Tuilleries for the sole purpose of insulting the queen.

Marie-Antoinette, feeling that the position of royalty was becoming more desperate each day, mastered her pride as daughter of an emperor, trampled under foot her most profound antipathy and asked for an interview with the man whom up till then she had called " the

monster," the tribune who, by his irresistible eloquence, had launched France into the Revolution.

For a long time Mirabeau had ardently desired such an interview. It was arranged for the 3rd of July, 1790, in one of the conservatories in the park of Saint-Cloud. Mirabeau arrived, agitated and restless, at the appointed place long before the hour fixed.

The day was warm and sultry, the air charged with electricity; the intoxicating scent of the hot-house flowers, and the recollection of the queen's beauty and charm, dominated the mind of the tribune. Mirabeau was half drunk with memories and vague desires.

He was at that time fifty-one, but his leonine head and enthusiastic heart were as easily inflamed as though he had been but thirty. So brilliant were his eyes that the onlooker, seeing him at that moment, would scarcely have observed the distressing pimples which disfigured his face.

The queen appeared, approaching slowly and moving as usual like a goddess. She had still her lovely ash-blond hair, her troubles had robbed her cheeks of their roses, but her skin had now the delicate colour of a pearl; her beautiful blue eyes no longer sparkled with mischief as formerly, but they were still alluring and captivating; her face bore traces of moral suffering, but her melancholy smile gained in poetry what it lost in piquancy. This woman, thirty-four, and unhappy, was still, in spite of everything, more fascinating than many a young girl. Moreover, Marie-Antoinette desired to gain Mirabeau over to the king's cause, and she knew that to succeed in this she must lay herself out to please. So she looked at him with the seductive eyes of a queen accustomed to admiration, and of a woman in trouble. She smiled at him with that smile which had won so many hearts but which was infinitely more touching now since it implored and disturbed at the same time.

Mirabeau could not resist such charm and such prayers as these. He honestly wished to save the royalty whose

stability he had shaken. But even Mirabeau could no longer restrain the French Revolution. He exhausted himself in vain efforts to serve the queen's cause, and as he lay dying the following year (the 2nd of April, 1791) he spoke the truth when he observed regretfully and sadly, "With me there goes the death-dirge of the French monarchy."

Indeed, every day this monarchy and the queen were more and more reviled and attacked. The very day after Mirabeau's death (the 3rd of April, 1791), the pious and orthodox Louis XVI was compelled to sign the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, and a few days later, on the 18th of April, he and the queen realised that they were prisoners at the Tuileries.

On that particular day, the royal couple had decided to go to Saint-Cloud. So the order was given to get ready the carriage which was to convey them. But when the king and queen gave the signal to start, the carriage was surrounded by soldiers of the National Guard who were joined by republicans from outside, and the horses could not advance one step. In vain Louis, agitated at last in spite of his optimism, exclaimed after lowering the carriage window: "It would be strange indeed if after giving liberty to the nation, I were not to be free myself!" In reality, he was no longer free, and the journey to Saint-Cloud could not be accomplished notwithstanding a struggle lasting two hours in the courtyard of the Tuileries. In vain the Marquis de Duras performed prodigies of valour, it only ended in his being very roughly treated. In vain La Fayette himself ordered that the king should be allowed to leave, no one paid any attention and the struggle in the courtyard of the Tuileries was hardly over, when the king and queen were subjected to a domiciliary visit from soldiers of the National Guard under the pretext that they were searching for some dissident priests. Never before had Marie-Antoinette so fully realised to what depths of humiliation the French monarchy was reduced.

In order to escape from the agonies of an intolerable position, the king and queen considered the question of flight. They had friends whom they could trust and who were able and anxious to help them in their attempt. One of them, the Marquis de Bouillé, an ardent Royalist, was in command of the entire western frontier stretching from the Moselle to Switzerland. Another was a man still more enthusiastic in his sentiments, who had been the queen's devoted servant ever since their first meeting. On her account, and because of the love he bore her, he had gone into voluntary exile in America for several years, in order that she should not be compromised.[1] For her sake also, Axel de Fersen, for it was he who was to play the leading part in the scheme for the royal flight, had returned to France, at the first menace to royalty. He came to protect and fortify with his active sympathy the woman whom he set above all others, his idol, his most admired queen, the ideal woman to whom none other could compare in his own mind. The thought that it was in his power to rescue her from her enemies gave him the most profound satisfaction. Acting in conjunction with the Marquis de Bouillé, he procured passports for each member of the royal family. That of the queen was made out in the name of Baroness de Korf, the king, according to the passports, being her valet. Fersen desired that Marie-Antoinette should have every comfort and luxury on the journey, and his great love for her led him to order the most sumptuous dressing-case which attracted the attention of those who had charge of her even before she left the Tuileries. The pains he took in the building of the *berline* destined for the royal fugitives had the same result. In many minds these preparations aroused suspicion.

But Count de Fersen was blind to all this. He paid 100,000 francs out of his own pocket and borrowed

[1] See *Princesses, Ladies and Salonnières of the Reign of Louis XV*, by Thérèse Louis Latour. Chapter X. "The Private Life of Marie-Antoinette".

another 296,000 for these wonderful preparations. It was he himself who, on the 20th of June, 1791, drove the horses which were to convey the royal family to a foreign land.

The departure from Paris was accomplished without any mishap. Fersen felt the day was already won and a few miles from the capital he handed over the reins to a coachman whom he could trust. The failure of the attempted flight was in no way the fault of this man, but was due to the king's indiscretions, added to those committed in the name of love by Fersen and to the lack of discipline among the Marquis de Bouillé's troops. The king, who was nervous, kept continually putting his head out of the window in order to assure himself that no one was in pursuit. Thus he was recognised in spite of his disguise, and as suspicions had been aroused ever since Fersen's preparations the alarm was immediately given and the royal family was arrested at Varennes in Argonne by order of Jean-Baptiste Drouet, postmaster at Sainte-Menehould, afterwards a member of the Convention and later still (the 21st of June, 1791) a member of the Council of Five Hundred.

The queen was completely prostrated when Drouet ordered the arrest of the royal party. She saw clearly from the very first moment how this last incident would aggravate the situation and how henceforth she and the king had little reason to hope. But she rose to meet misfortune and quickly recovering her self-control, devoted herself, like a tender and thoughtful mother, to the care of the two children, and when the commissaries of the Constitution arrived at Varennes, on the 23rd of June, Marie-Antoinette had already regained her queenly dignity and was mistress of herself, although in no wise sharing Louis' optimism.

The two commissaries [1] sent by the Constituent Assembly to bring back the royal fugitives to the Tuileries were Barnave and Pétion. These two men, fundamen-

[1] The third was the royalist, La Tour Maubourg.

tally different in character, were to excite in the breasts of their prisoners widely different feelings and to experience themselves entirely opposite sensations.

Barnave, the son of a stern lawyer and of a mother as beautiful as she was distinguished, had been brought up in the strict atmosphere of a just but rigid reformed faith. He had a proud and passionate nature. At the age of sixteen he had fought a duel to revenge an insult to his brother. Deputy to the States-General in 1789, he came into the limelight almost at once as a result of his eloquence, energy and honesty. Until now the court had looked upon him as an irreconcilable demagogue and a redoubtable revolutionary.

But, seated between the king and queen at the back of the *berline* in which the royal family were being taken back to Paris, he found the means to show his respect without descending to platitudes. He allowed the king to give free vent to his emotion in words. But while Louis was talking, it was Marie-Antoinette whom Barnave observed. He admired her dignified grief, the charm of her conversation and her power of persuasion, when, sure of the respectful and discreet compassion which she inspired in the commissary she took part in the talk. Barnave was gradually vanquished by her fragility and sufferings, and by the charm which she exhaled. Perhaps, too, he was a little flattered by the thought that it was in his power to become the protector of this beautiful and unhappy queen. He was only thirty, an age of great enthusiasms and disinterested passions. Be this as it may, Barnave, while fully aware of the great risks he ran by showing active sympathy for the queen, from that moment dedicated himself to her service with a loyalty which never swerved and which was ready for any and every sacrifice.

Very different was the attitude of Pétion. He sat by Madame Elizabeth's side on the other seat in the *berline* and was pre-eminently occupied in attempts to gain her admiration. This handsome man was so convinced of

the power of his physical charms that he thought no young woman could resist him. Thus Madame Elizabeth having shown some constraint during the hearty meals made by Pétion, who saw nothing unnatural in making the princess fill his glass, he wrote in his note-book: "Madame Elizabeth gazed at me with a tender and languishing air. Our eyes sometimes met with a sort of understanding and attraction. . . . I may be mistaken, but I believe if we had been alone she would have allowed herself to fall into my arms and surrender to her natural impulses."

While these intimate dramas or comedies were developing inside the *berline* the travellers were approaching Paris, and encountering a great deal of hostility on the way. Only once along the whole line of route was the royal family cheered by a really warm reception, which was accorded them by a Monsieur and Madame Regnard at Châlons-sur-Marne. The husband and wife humbly begged the honour of receiving the king and queen in their home. On entering, Marie-Antoinette said to Madame Regnard: "Are you the mistress of the house, Madame?" and Madame Regnard, sweeping a deep curtsey, replied, "I was, before your Majesty did me the great honour of entering it."

On the 25th of June the *berline* reached the last stage of its journey and entered Paris at six o'clock in the evening. This entry was the greatest humiliation which had yet been inflicted on the royal family. Not even the return from Versailles on the 6th of October, 1789, had had the same air of bitter contempt nor produced the gloomy silence which marked their arrival on the 25th of June, 1791. The National Guards stood with arms reversed as though at a funeral, and everywhere along the route traversed by the royal family were to be seen placards with the words: "Persons cheering the king or the queen or any other member of the royal family will be flogged." It was amid this silence and these threats that the royal family again entered the

Tuileries where the closest confinement lay in store for them. And yet, on the 29th of June, Marie-Antoinette, in spite of her fears and disappointments, had the courage to write to Axel de Fersen this letter, admirable in its self-abnegation and devoted friendship, which trusted friends succeeded in delivering to the count: "I am alive. . . . O, how anxious I have been about you and how distressed I am for all you are suffering in being without news of us. . . . Do not write to me, it would expose you to danger, and above all do not return under any pretext whatsoever. Farewell, I cannot write more to you."

The royal family were not allowed to be present at the Fête of the Federation (14th July, 1791) and probably the public life of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette would have ended then had it not been for the friendly and skilful intervention of Barnave, whose devotion to Marie-Antoinette had continued to increase ever since the journey back from Varennes.

Prompted by this active and ardent affection, he endeavoured to reconcile his love for the republic with his desire to save the king and queen. Thus it came about that little by little he set to work to study events from the point of view of the royal family and strove to discover what counsels could save Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette without harming the republic. It was this consideration that caused Barnave to urge Louis to sign the new Constitution which was to give birth to the Legislative Assembly. Louis was averse to signing, but Barnave's persuasions prevailed and the king signed the document on the 30th of July, 1791.

This act seemed at first to achieve all that Barnave had hoped from it. The surveillance over the king and queen at the Tuileries was relaxed; their majesties were seen about again in Paris. They went to the play, and on the 20th of February, 1792, the queen was even cheered at the "Italiens". But the next day, the revolutionary journal, *L'Orateur du peuple*, published a

violent article against her, in which it went so far as to say: "The queen will be whipped in her box at the theatre if she continues to play the strumpet."

The cheers at the "Italiens" were the last which were to greet the queen's ears. After February of 1792, the royal family knew only sorrows, affliction and suffering. The insulting epithets applied to the queen were multiplied. To the old ones were added "Madam Veto" and "The Starver of France". Several times when Marie-Antoinette sought to show herself with her children to the mob in order to calm them she was forced to retire before the vociferations with which she was received. In May and June Paris rose in revolt. It is even claimed that on the 20th of June, 1792, Fersen entered the Tuileries with the mob to protect the queen. In July, Marie-Antoinette lost her brother, the Emperor Leopold. Finally, in August, a terrible day saw the end of royalty.

It was the 10th of August. On that particular day Paris was in a ferment. The faubourgs were seething with commotion; the excited mob was ready to commit any and every crime. Ever since morning the armed rabble of the faubourgs Sainte-Antoine and Saint-Marceau had been rushing, in a state of frenzy, in the direction of the Tuileries. The tocsin sounded from the churches of Saint-Roch, the Assumption and the Conception; terror was in the air. Fresh crowds continued without ceasing to join the first hordes billowing on to the Tuileries and Louis XVI had only his faithful Swiss to fight all these wild and furious masses. So, in order to save their lives, and to avoid assassinations, and also because he was an optimist, the king resolved to seek refuge together with his family, his children's governess, the Princesse de Lamballe and two or three other ardent supporters of his cause, with the Legislative Assembly and to ask its help and protection.

It was indeed a melancholy procession which went forth, preceded by a National Guard who directed the march. When they reached the Assembly they found

it a prey to wild tumult and disorder. People were killing each other on its doorsteps, its window panes were shivered in a thousand pieces, while the cannon thundered and the tocsin continued to call the Parisians to arms. The situation was so appalling that one or two deputies suggested breaking up the meeting. But the majority protested and replied to their fears with cries of "Long live Liberty!" "Long live the Nation!" It was at this precise moment that the king and queen entered with their little suite. For a few minutes the confusion was still further augmented by their arrival. But the Assembly was so rejoiced by the king's blunder in placing himself and his whole family at its mercy that it almost forgot the danger of the moment in its desire to make the new-comers feel at once how small they were in the presence of the nation's deputies.

The king and queen were not given seats among the deputies, but relegated to the reporters' box (*loge de logographe*), under the roof of the hall, where the heat was intense, the air stifling and the space sadly limited. It is true that the Constitution prohibited the Assembly from debating while the king was present. Its president, Vergniaud, was unable, therefore, to allow Louis XVI to sit by his side as he did for a few minutes on arrival.

However Louis regained confidence directly the hubbub subsided and was soon asking to be supplied with oranges for his refreshment. Marie-Antoinette, on the contrary, felt all the pain, humiliation and danger immanent in such a situation. She wept silently and tried to follow the debates in order to learn what she could from them.

The suffering and significance of the 10th of August were not lost upon the queen and her heart sank when that evening the Assembly imprisoned the royal family in four low and narrow cells in the convent of the Feuillants. The mob shrieked and howled outside these cells and tried to force the grille at the end of the gallery in order to kill the various members of the royal family. The queen heard, and realised the whole horror of the

situation. On the 3rd of August when the Assembly transferred the royal family from the prison of the Feuillants to that of the Temple, Marie-Antoinette wondered if it were possible to suffer more than she had already suffered.

But her calvary had only begun. At the Temple where she went with the king, her children, Madame Elizabeth, Mesdames de Tourzel and the Princesse de Lamballe, she was received by the Marseillais to the tune of these ironical and threatening lines :

" Madame monte à sa tour
Ne sait quand descendra."

[" Madame climbs up into her tower
And does not know when she will come down again."]

The queen did not choose to understand the gist of these malicious songs, and on arrival at the Temple seemed to be absorbed in her efforts to ameliorate the lot of those whom she loved and who shared her sufferings. She felt that a serene courage was the best support which she could give the king, her children and her sister-in-law. So, cheerfully and uncomplainingly, she helped the Princesse de Lamballe prepare the little bed on which the devoted princess was to sleep in the dark and narrow passage leading out of the queen's room to that of Madame Royale, her daughter. Marie-Antoinette also helped to instal Louis and the young prince, her son, in the large room in the tower, while the king's valet, Cléry, got the dressing-room ready for his own occupation so that he might be near his master both sleeping and waking. Madame Elizabeth had to sleep on the ground-floor in the room formerly occupied by the cook. The walls of the Tower chosen for Louis XVI's accommodation were nine feet thick and when the king was passing for the first time through the ante-chamber which led to his room his eye was at once caught by an immense placard of the " Declaration of the Rights of Man ". On the tiles of the hearth the words " liberty ", " equality ", " fraternity ", were engraved in big letters, while on the clock

which adorned the mantelpiece the word " king " had been effaced. One day, Marie-Antoinette having asked for a child's high chair in order that the young prince might eat comfortably at table, Bernard, the gaoler, took it away again a few hours after he had granted the request, saying : " I have never seen a table or a chair given to prisoners, straw is good enough for them." [1]

But these vexations were small compared with the cruel separation which Marie-Antoinette was to suffer on the night of the 19th–20th of August. The prisoners of the Temple were asleep, when suddenly heavy footsteps were heard near the queen's bedroom. These footsteps came to a standstill in the dark passage where the Princesse de Lamballe slept. In a flash Marie-Antoinette realised that they had come to rob her of her faithful and most devoted friend. Hastily rising, she rushed to the princess to try and protect her with tears and supplication from those who had come to take her away. But it was in vain, not only was the Princesse de Lamballe snatched from the queen's affections, but also Madame and Mademoiselle de Tourzel. The queen then mastered her grief and tried to protect beyond the Temple walls her sweet Lamballe whom she knew to be so timorous and sensitive, and who, she had a foreboding, was threatened by great and imminent calamities. She implored Madame de Tourzel to do for the princess what she herself could no longer do. " Look after my poor Lamballe well ! " she begged, " make her your responsibility."

Again, it was thanks to Marie-Antoinette that the prisoners of the Temple were able to enjoy a certain amount of contact with their friends outside, from July to October, 1792. Her goodness, her sweetness and her amiability encouraged the warder Turgy, who became the link between the royal family and those who wanted

[1] This man Bernard knew adversity in his turn ; he was a friend of Robespierre, and fell with him and was beheaded the same day, the 10th of Thermidor, year X (or the 29th of July, 1794).

to help her. The queen also gained the sympathy of the warder, Goret, by the charming manner in which she conversed with him. She begged him to tell her the history of the famous Château de Coucy which he knew so well, and queen though she had been, she showed the same deference for Goret's opinions which she would have shown formerly to a *seigneur* of the court, so much so, that her enemies have gone the length of reproaching her with familiarity with her gaolers. Of these accusations Marie-Antoinette probably knew nothing; if she had any knowledge of them the horrible ordeal of the 3rd of September, 1792, would have prevented her from taking any notice.

The 3rd of September, 1792, like the 10th of August, was stained with blood and atrocities. France's enemies abroad joined the *émigrés* in making war on a republic which they refused to recognise and which held captive the sovereign whom it had dethroned. The Duke of Brunswick adding insult to injury had issued a violent and scurrilous manifesto against France on the 25th of July, 1792, which infuriated all the French who had not left France. A burning desire for reprisals rose in the people; they pretended to fear the plots which the aristocrats in prison had succeeded in fomenting with the enemy outside. In the name of these plots, the bloodthirsty enthusiasts of Paris demanded the wholesale massacre of the prisoners. Danton, minister of the interior at that time, lacked the firmness and determination to prevent these massacres. Without having ordered them, for he disapproved of them, as one of the latest works which have appeared on Danton[1] brilliantly proves, he, nevertheless, allowed them to happen, and the excited and unhappy mob, joined by numbers of contemptible, covetous foreigners, gave the rein to its lowest and most sanguinary instincts, killing without mercy thousands of innocent victims and soiling France with its murders.

[1] See *Danton*, by Louis Madelin, published in 1914.

One of the first and most pathetic of these victims was the sweet and good Lamballe. On her the cut-throats wreaked their hatred for Marie-Antoinette. They treated her corpse with ruthless ferocity and after placing the dainty and childish head of the princess, its face still convulsed with fear, on the top of a pike, they were determined that the queen should see it. They took their way to the Temple, the pike with its bleeding head borne in front by the tallest among them.

The commissaries of the Temple themselves were terrified at the sight of the hideous mob, intoxicated with blood and wine. They tried to arrest its progress and when it refused to listen to their exhortations they stretched a tricolour ribbon across the entrance to the Temple. But passions were too inflamed for even this emblem of liberty to stem the onward rush. The procession crossed the symbolic barrier and placed the livid and bleeding head of the Princesse de Lamballe beneath the queen's window, crying out that the two friends should embrace each other for the last time.

The noise drew the queen to the window and then the unhappy sovereign saw, as in a horrible nightmare, all those malignant and repulsive faces sneering as they menaced her. She beheld the gory head of her dear Lamballe, with its dreadful expression of terror. She heard the infuriated mob clamouring for her life, and this vision of hell caused her to fall unconscious to the ground.

The victory of Valmy, which was won over the Prussians by Dumouriez and Kellermann on the 20th of September, 1792, had also its sad repercussion on the lives of the prisoners of the Temple.

Since the end of August the king had been deprived of his sword. On the 29th of September, after Valmy, both he and the queen were deprived of pens, ink and paper, while at the same time Hébert informed the king that henceforward he would be completely separated from his family.

On the 6th of November, the king and queen learned that Louis XVI would be tried and on the 11th of December the prince was taken away from his father and brought back to his mother, who immediately devoted herself to his education, as she had already done in the case of her daughter.

In spite of her troubles and perplexities, Marie-Antoinette remained uniformly sweet and gentle. The woman Tison, who looked after the queen, invented all sorts of spiteful tales about her. But Marie-Antoinette never bore her the slightest grudge, indeed, one day, having learned that this woman was ill and had no soup, the only food which the doctor allowed her, the queen at once sent her the only cup of soup which she had.

Meanwhile, the king's trial proceeded. Guillaume de Lamoignōn de Malesherbes, Louis XVI's former minister, an upright judge and the king's devoted servant, surpassed himself in courage and eloquence in his efforts to save the sovereign. But Louis had to be condemned. Had not Danton, speaking of the *émigrés* and of France's enemies abroad, said: "Let us throw them a king's head in defiance!" Moreover, Louis, badly advised, politically inexperienced and vacillating, his judgment obscured by the traditions of his race, had, notwithstanding his ardent desire to do the right thing, made many mistakes, which had been aggravated by the difficulties of the time. Thus his enemies had a certain amount of truth on which to base their indictments; passions also helped, and the king was condemned to death by a large majority of the Legislative Assembly. Undoubtedly, the Girondin party which often counterbalanced the bloody revolutionism of the Montagnards, only voted for Louis XVI's death under the sway of fear, and with feelings of regret, but on the surface all parties in the Assembly desired it and the execution was fixed for the 21st of January, 1793.

The queen, who was completely separated from her husband, had been unable to follow the painful fluctu-

ations of the debates, but her thoughts constantly turned to the drama which was being played out, and she suffered in imagination all the tortures of fear with those of uncertainty superadded.

All this suffering led only to the final interview of the 20th of January.

It was nine o'clock; Louis had obtained permission from his masters to see his queen for the last time. More agitated by the grief of the woman whom he was about to leave for ever than by the thought of his own fate, the king, who nevertheless maintained his self-control, was unable at first to find words in which to express to Marie-Antoinette his sorrow at leaving her alone in the terrible time they were going through. He could only gather her in his arms, hold her closely to him and make her realise all the love he had grown to feel for her since they had suffered so deeply together and she had shown herself so great in misfortune. Then, gradually, the king mastered his emotion. He explained to the queen all that he expected of her: she must bring up their son to love France and the French people; she must teach him that they had erred for a time, but that they were really good and capable of great and splendid things. She, too, must forgive them the wrong which they had done to her and himself, must pray for them and trust them, for they would again return to their true nature.

He also recommended to her kindness his sister, Madame Elizabeth, who had always been so loving and devoted to them, and who, present at the meeting, together with the children, shared these harrowing farewells.

But time sped on while the king was imposing these heroic duties on the queen. Marie-Antoinette promised to do all he asked, but her eyes were fixed anxiously on the clock whose hands moved forward so rapidly! The queen felt that her time with the king was short. She clung to him with the passion of despair. This must not be their last meeting. Louis must promise his wife to

see her to-morrow morning, to embrace her once more before the final separation, to let her share the greatness of those hours already stamped with the seal of the next world. But his father confessor, the abbé. Edgeworth, begged him to avoid a second meeting which would be likely to be still more harrowing and dangerous than the first. He was a king and a Christian, said the abbé, before being a husband and father, and he must save up all his strength for the public and tragic scene to be enacted on the scaffold. Louis yielded to the abbé's advice and went to his death on the 21st of January without seeing the queen again.

Marie-Antoinette never closed her eyes the whole night through. With a heart wrung by anguish, she followed every hour of that dramatic vigil.

As morning approached, she imagined in the lightest sound, in the creaking of the boards, the king's footsteps approaching her door. Several times she got up to run to her husband. But the night came to an end, the pale light of a January morning shone in her room and the queen never saw the king again.

Then, with the obstinacy of the unhappy who refuse to abandon hope, Marie-Antoinette thought that perhaps the Assembly had reconsidered its decision, that the fatal execution had been postponed for further inquiries, that the king would not come that morning, but that she would see him the next day or very soon, and so that she might give him fresh proof of her desire to be worthy of him, she dressed quickly and immediately afterwards set to work to inculcate in the minds of the children the sentiments which the king had enjoined her to teach them.

It was while the widow Capet was explaining to her son that the French were not wicked, that they would soon be sorry for the wrong they had done, that one must love them because they had many good qualities, and that a king, like a father, must only remember the weaknesses and wrongdoing of his children in order to try and correct

them with the least possible suffering, that the newsvendors shouted beneath the windows of the Temple: "Account of the tyrant's death! Louis Capet's last moments. The traitor's last lie!"

On hearing these cries Marie-Antoinette was at first as one stunned. Were they really saying what she heard, or did her fevered brain torture itself needlessly? Then the noise gathered in strength, the cries multiplied and the queen realised that the great crime had been perpetrated.

Silent and dry-eyed, the widow-martyr remained like a statue for three days and three nights, motionless, fearful to look at, giving no other sign of life than was betokened by her haggard gaze and the nervous contraction of her muscles. As Sainte-Beuve says, it is probable that the queen's grim torpor would have led to either madness or death if Madame Royale had not just at that moment fallen seriously ill. Her maternal instinct recalled Marie-Antoinette to life and activity. She forgot herself in nursing her child, and the great effort which she was forced to make saved her from herself and from her terrible grief.

Doubtless far more broken and crushed than before the 21st of January, but with strength renewed by her will-power, Marie-Antoinette resumed her rôle of educating her children and excusing the faults of France. This bitter mission which she had promised her husband with passion to fulfil, brought her its austere consolations when she was overtaken by a fresh calamity, more sudden and of a more intimate nature than any which she had yet experienced.

It was during the night of the 2nd–3rd of July, 1793. Marie-Antoinette had been in bed for some hours, her little son in the second bed in her room, which he had occupied since the 11th of December, 1792. The child was in a sound, refreshing sleep, when the bedroom door opened. Two commissaries had come to fetch the little Capet in order to confide him to the care of the tutor

chosen for him by the Convention. The queen, trembling with despair at the thought of losing her child after having lost his father, and already foreseeing all that the little boy would have to suffer, far from her, objected that it was a strange time to remove her son to a tutor. She would let him go the next day, but she implored them to allow him to finish the night with her. If she could gain time would it not postpone suffering ? . . . But the commissaries declared that their orders were immediate and that they must take Capet at once. Besides, they had no time to lose in idle conversation.

Then Marie-Antoinette, powerless and at the end of her arguments, flung herself between the commissaries and her son, to guard him from them by the rampart of her body. But the commissaries made short work of throwing her to one side, and bore off the child without even troubling to dress him.

When the queen attempted to run after them in order to try and snatch the boy from their arms, she found the door bolted, and an impassable barrier already stood between herself and her son !

Henceforward, Marie-Antoinette never saw him except in the distance, but she saw him clearly enough to know that he was dressed in the *carmagnole*, that he had been taught the gestures and manners of the *sansculottes*, that he had been given a taste for drink, and imbued with a hatred for all his relations.

One day Marie-Antoinette and Madame Elizabeth distinctly heard the child refer to them in these words : " Whenever will those bawds go to the guillotine ? "

Even the king's death was not more terrible to Marie-Antoinette than the sight of what they had made of her son.

So when on the night of the 1st of August, 1793, the commissaries of the Convention again invaded the queen's room, they found a woman crushed by the immensity of her sufferings into a state of resignation. She did not even attempt to inquire why they wished to take

her to the Conciergerie in the middle of the night. She dressed without protest in the presence of those who had come to fetch her. And when, before leaving the Temple, she knocked her head against too low a doorway and was asked if she had hurt herself, " No," she replied, " nothing can hurt me any more now."

But she was mistaken, for before crossing the last enceinte of the Temple, she looked back twice, with tears in her eyes, at this prison in which she was leaving all that remained of those she loved best : her two children and Madame Elizabeth whom she was not allowed to see for the last time.

Outside, a huge display of troops awaited the queen. The carriage into which she was thrust was surrounded by gendarmes. So many precautions were taken in regard to this unhappy woman that it took several hours to conduct her from the Temple to the Conciergerie !

It was three o'clock in the morning when Marie-Antoinette arrived in the courtyard of this second prison, which had already been nicknamed the ante-chamber to the scaffold. The queen was as calm as when she had said to her warders in the Temple a few hours previously, " Nothing can hurt me now ".

The concierge Richard conducted Marie-Antoinette to the council-hall which had been turned into a cell for her. When the queen was entered in the gaol-book he retired and sent his wife and a servant to help her to undress, but when they offered their services to the prisoner, Marie-Antoinette mournfully replied : " Thank you, but for a long time now I have waited on myself." The queen began by wiping the copious perspiration from her face, then she let her eyes wander sadly over the walls of her new prison, climbed on a footstool to hang up her watch and submissively got into bed as she was bidden.

From the very first morning two gendarmes were placed in the queen's room to watch her every movement, but she thought before all else of her children.

When she saw Richard's son, whose age was near that

of her own, her eyes often filled with tears, and the sadness of her countenance, already so profound, was accentuated. Indeed, however great were Marie-Antoinette's privations at the Conciergerie, it was moral sorrows from which she suffered most. And yet she was refused even the most indispensable things. She had nothing in which to put the little linen which had been left her, not the smallest wardrobe or chest of drawers until the day when Richard's servant secretly handed her a box in which to keep her linen, and gave her a mirror which she had bought for the queen at the fair for twenty-five sous.

Soon, however, Marie-Antoinette could not utilise the box given to her by Richard's maid, as her linen was doled out to her piece by piece. They even went so far as to deprive her of her watch and rings.

But the queen's friends were active and numerous. Even those who were imprisoned in the Conciergerie at the same time as herself ventured to show their affection. One day when a gendarme de garde was brushing a pair of cloth shoes belonging to the queen, an ecclesiastic and a grand *seigneur* besought him to be allowed to kiss these shoes !

But her friends outside were influential in other ways. Fersen, those of the old bodyguard who were still alive, the young men whom the sorrows and heroism of the queen had won over, all sought means to rescue her from prison.

Barnave was no longer among them, for, suspected of royalism after the services which he had rendered the sovereigns, he had been under arrest since the 19th of August, 1792, having foreseen his fate for months. On the evening of the 10th of August, he wrote to the queen : " Certain of paying one day with my head for the interest which your misfortunes have roused in me, I ask, Madam, as sole reward, the honour of kissing your hand." [1]

[1] The correspondence between Marie-Antoinette and Barnave, which comprises not less than eighty-eight letters, each of proven authenticity, always remained clandestine. It was the Chevalier

After his arrest Barnave languished for a year in prison and it was in 1793, at the age of thirty, that he mounted the scaffold without having revealed anything of his relations with the sovereign, out of respect for the oath which he had made to Marie-Antoinette. In the course of September, 1793, Marie-Antoinette's devoted friends thought that they would be able to succeed in freeing the queen. They did, indeed, succeed at that time in introducing one of their number, Monsieur de Rougeville, into the prison to take the place of one of the two gendarmes who guarded her.

Marie-Antoinette very quickly noticed that the newcomer was no ordinary gendarme. His manners, his air of distinction, his kind attentions to the prisoner, all struck the queen and attracted her. She went up to him and almost before she had reached his side the mysterious gendarme dropped a white carnation at her feet. In spite of her poor sight Marie-Antoinette saw the flower and picked it up unseen by anyone. Soon she discovered that the carnation concealed a note ; probably the note required an answer. This reflection worried her because she found difficulty in reading since her eyes had become so weak. Moreover, she had nothing to write with and the reading and writing must be done in secret. Her friends proposed to rescue her the following night and asked her to let them know if she were willing to take the risk and trust herself to them.

The queen had complete confidence in her friends, but did not know how to send a message. It seemed impossible to write the answer they asked for. But at last she hit upon the idea of pricking the message on paper with the aid of a hairpin ; the holes made by the hairpin

de Jarjayes, the devoted servant of the king and queen, who carried letters between the two. Marie-Antoinette, who was too closely watched at the Tuileries to send the letters which she wrote to Barnave direct to Jarjayes, slipped them into the latter's pocket when she took the answers out of it. Barnave's name was never written in those letters ; it was designated by the formula $2 = 1$.

would form the letters and words. The idea was ingenious, but difficult to carry out, the queen being watched as she was. In any case only a short sentence would have any chance of being understood in this strange writing. Unfortunately the queen was dominated by the desire to write in detail to her friends instead of writing as briefly as possible. Thus she wrote fourteen words and not a single one of them could be read by those for whom they were destined. This unfortunate note, which remained undecipherable until the end of the following century, ran :

" I am watched. It is impossible to write. I will trust myself to you."

It gave the queen a great deal of trouble and only succeeded in causing the failure of the plot and a more painful and inquisitorial confinement for the woman it had been hoped to save. This plot is known to history as " The white carnation conspiracy."

The day following the conspiracy the queen was moved from the large hall which she had occupied since the 1st of August into an underground dungeon, which was only lighted by the lamp in the women's courtyard. The sun's rays never reached it ; it was pitch dark for the most part, and at the best of times only a gleam of light pierced the gloom. In this almost total darkness the queen became increasingly blind.

From that day onwards the guard was reinforced and changed. A gaoler was added to the two gendarmes and these men received an official order never to let the woman Capet out of their sight for a single instant. As a result these guards always remained near Marie-Antoinette. They watched her dressing, undressing, sleeping, dreaming, nothing that she did was allowed to escape them. It was with difficulty that Marie-Antoinette obtained permission to have a small and very low screen behind which to perform the most private part of her toilet.

Her guards might even remove this screen if they thought the queen was using it longer than she should,

or trying to elude their supervision. Marie-Antoinette was no longer her own mistress ; nothing that was intimate or private in her life was respected. Her gaolers even amused themselves by puffing the smoke from their big pipes in her face.

Her day also was regulated to suit the taste of her masters. She rose at six o'clock in the morning and went to bed at eight. She had no other means of shortening the interminable dark hours except by trying to read the books supplied her by her tormentors. These were the history of the trial and death of Charles I of England, of Marie Stuart, Elizabeth's captive, of all the kings who were the victims of circumstances and of their own people.

But these inflictions were bearable by the side of those which she was to suffer at the hands of Fouquier Tinville. The great public prosecutor had reserved to himself the right to instruct the prosecution in the queen's trial. Possessing a mind that delighted in cruelty, Fouquier had at his command all the refinements of torture for those whom he persecuted. He revelled in their sufferings as an artist reveals in a masterpiece. Crime attracted him, and he gloried in being the bloody hero of tyranny.

Deciding to interrogate the queen at night, he waited until she was asleep, and after the first quarter of an hour of a sleep insufficient to have repaired her strength or calmed her nerves, he awakened the prisoner abruptly in order to accuse her of all the crimes attributed to her. With a mind confused by the sudden awakening, under the fantastic influences of night and terrified by being alone with her accuser, she could, he thought, be made to confess the vices of which he insisted she was guilty and the horrible deeds which he and his friends declared she had committed.

But Marie-Antoinette resisted the tyrant's will. Each night the torture was renewed in vain. Fouquier Tinville drew from the queen nothing but the truth. Here were none of the acts which justified the hatred of the

people and the *sansculottes*, none of the dark deeds which explained all the evil spoken of her. Fouquier Tinville would have raged over a check so unmerited had he not had pressure of another kind to bring to bear on his victim.

Of this pressure he was absolutely sure. He knew well that it would succeed and that all arrangements had been made for its efficient working.

The thought which weighed heavily on the queen's mind was her son's welfare. The child was not yet nine, but for the past two months he had been in the hands of the cobbler Simon, who had left no stone unturned to corrupt his youthful mind, to brutalise this little child by alcohol and by fear, and to teach him what answers to give when interrogated if he did not wish to be killed like his father.

On the 12th of February, 1794, the English ambassador at Paris, Sir Francis Drake, wrote in French to his minister, Lord Granville [1]: "Simon admits that they have got Louis XVII into the habit of drinking strong liquors, that Hébert and his soldiers with whom he is surrounded, have taught him nothing but filth and oaths. I think that what they did to the child at the time of his mother's trial to make him give evidence against her and to give the semblance of truth to his depositions was enough to corrupt and poison him. He is only supplied with the most obscene books for his amusement. Several times Hébert has threatened to have him guillotined, and this frightens him so dreadfully that he faints."

It was on the 7th of October that Fouquier Tinville made this child give evidence against his mother. He said, as he had been bidden to say, that the queen and Madame Elizabeth had committed incest with him, giving full and precise details of the scene.

Now Fouquier Tinville had what he needed to excite indignation against the queen. But he did not relax the

[1] See the *14th Report, Historical MSS. Commission, on the Dropmore MSS.* Vol. II, p. 529 (Translator's note).

violence of his efforts to drag sensational admissions from her. On the 12th of October the last interrogation of the queen was the longest and the most cruel of any. It began at two o'clock in the morning and continued until daylight. As in the earlier interrogations, she said nothing that Fouquier Tinville wanted to hear, and the prosecutor's hatred of the queen was, as a result, all the more violent.

It showed itself in all the measures which he took in the matter of the trial. First of all everything was arranged for the accommodation of a large number of *Tricoteuses*. These women, drawn from a very low class, and embittered by misery, were the natural enemies of a queen who had been happy, beautiful and admired.

Fouquier Tinville not only wanted to seat as many *Tricoteuses* as possible, but he also wanted to arrange the *Salle des Débats* so as to give them the best possible entertainment. While the hall was to remain in darkness, he caused the platform on which the widow Capet would sit, to be brilliantly illuminated. In this way it would be easy to expose her to public view. Finally, Fouquier meant to multiply the occasions on which the accused would be obliged to stand.

The public examination began on the 14th of October at eight o'clock in the morning. The queen's counsels were Chaveau-Lagarde and Tronçon-Ducoudray.

The queen arrived, convinced of the integrity and honesty of her judges. She now looked very old, although she was only thirty-eight. Her hair indeed was quite white ; her blue eyes, formerly so bright, now dimmed, could scarcely see well enough to guide her steps. Her lashes, so mobile in the gay days of Versailles, were now stiff, almost rigid. Marie-Antoinette had no remains of that brilliant and even complexion which had excited the admiration of the court. Except for two feverish bright red patches of colour on her cheekbones, the rest of her face was of a striking pallor. She was so emaciated as to seem almost ethereal; but her figure was upright

and dignified, while, in spite of her failing sight, the expression of her face was one of imposing majesty and lofty resignation.

Hardly had the queen entered the hall when Fouquier Tinville began his indictment with a bombastic and pretentious speech in which he sought to prove Marie-Antoinette guilty of three kinds of crime. She had, he said, plotted with the enemies within their gates. She had also plotted with their enemies abroad. Lastly, and this was a crime against nature, she had committed incest with her son.

At this third indictment the queen sprang to her feet, quivering with indignation. " I appeal to all mothers," she cried, wounded in her dignity as woman, bruised in her love as mother, outraged in her pride as queen. There was something in her outburst so sincere, so anguished and so pathetic that several *Tricoteuses* were seen furtively wiping the corners of their eyes.

But when this first moment of indignation was past, Marie-Antoinette feared lest she had been too impulsive. This unfortunate woman still believed in the justice of her accusers. Turning to Chaveau-Lagarde, with whom she had not been allowed to confer on any point, " Was I too haughty ? " she asked him. She fostered the illusion that the outcome of her trial depended on the arguments she employed and on her own attitude.

The examination continued without interruption until four o'clock in the afternoon, when there was an hour's interval, after which the argument was resumed, not to stop until the end of the trial at four o'clock the following morning. Many times during these long hours Fouquier Tinville ordered the accused to stand up in order to show herself. The exhausted Marie-Antoinette at last could not refrain from groaning : " Will the people never tire of my weariness ? "

She was thirsty, too, but only one among all those who heard her ask for something to drink ventured to rush and fetch her the glass of water she requested. It was

ANTOINE-QUENTIN FOUQUIER-TAINVILLE

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de Bûne, one of the last of the bodyguard, young men who remained so heroically loyal to the king and queen and to honour. As the trial continued to unfold de Bûne never took his eyes off the queen. He knew what the end would be, and he wanted to be near her at the moment when the unhappy woman would part with her last illusion, to show her all the respect, the admiration and the sympathy which she merited so well.

But the moment had arrived for the judge to pronounce his sentence. Without a second's hesitation he declared Marie-Antoinette to have been unanimously found guilty on the three counts of the indictment brought against her.

As a result she was condemned to death, and the execution was to take place that very same day.

Marie-Antoinette heard the sentence unmoved. Profoundly surprised, she did not, however, utter a single word. She crossed the hall without seeing anything, and on reaching the barrier, raised her head with dignity. It was then that de Bûne, hat in hand, asked the queen's permission to offer her his arm in order to help her down the dark stairs which led to her dungeon. Marie-Antoinette gratefully accepted without showing any resentment for the iniquitous sentence which had just been passed. Her courage and dignity had survived her hopes. As to de Bûne, a few months later he was to pay by death on the scaffold for the respect which he had paid the queen.

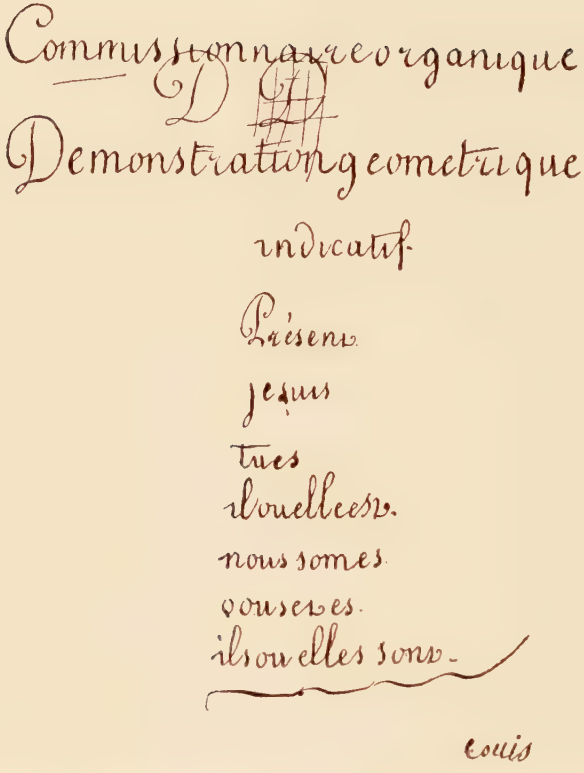
Marie-Antoinette, on entering her dungeon, took advantage of the moments of liberty which remained to her before making her last toilet, to write to Madame Elizabeth a last farewell, sublime in its heartrending simplicity. " It is to you, my sister, that I write for the last time. I have just been condemned, not to a shameful death, for it is only so for criminals, but I go to rejoin your brother ; innocent like him, I hope to show the same firmness as he did in his last moments . . . My good, sweet sister, may this letter reach you ! Remember me

always. I embrace you fondly, as also my poor, dear children. God ! how it breaks my heart to leave them for ever. Farewell, I am now going to devote myself only to my religious duties."

When she had finished this letter, which Madame Elizabeth was destined never to receive, the queen did indeed devote herself to her spiritual duties, but refused the services of the republican priest whom Fouquier Tinville offered her.

Then she made her mournful toilet. Less favoured than Louis XVI, Marie-Antoinette was conveyed to the scaffold in the common tumbrel. She appeared, followed by the executioner, Samson, holding the ends of the thick rope which bound her arms at the back. The queen was very pale, but very dignified, whatever may be said to the contrary, and notwithstanding David's painful portrait, which, although extremely realistic, contains nothing which can diminish her greatness.

At the entrance to the rue Saint-Honoré, a horrible clamour greeted the sinister tumbrel. The queen turned a shade paler and fixing her eyes on the garden of the Tuileries appeared deeply moved. But she had recovered all her heroic courage before she reached the scaffold and, in the words of a great poet, having known how to charm, Marie-Antoinette knew how to die as a heroine and a martyr.



FRAGMENT OF SCHOOLBOOK WRITING OF THE DUKE DE NORMANDY, LOUIS XVII

[*face p.* 144

FORGOTTEN AND UNKNOWN WOMEN OF THE REVOLUTION

MADAME BOUQUEZ, THE MARQUISE DE LA FAYETTE, MADAME LAVERGNE, AND THEIR SISTERS IN HEROISM

Women played a considerable part in the French Revolution. We come across them at meetings of the assemblies, in street riots, in the army, in prisons, in the clubs, with expiring royalty, defending the privileges of a society which was coming to an end, or on the platform demanding equality of the sexes before the law. They were to be found in every party and in all the great events of the period. Some led the balls at which the carmagnole was danced, while others were reciting the prayers for the dying for themselves and their companions in the tumbrels which bore them to the scaffold.

In this storm, the result of such diverse ideas and events, women represented all that was most noble, most heroic, most stoical and most disinterested, but also all that was worst. But if they were frivolous and cruel they were never cowards, with the single exception of the Duchesse du Barry. Beliefs, loyalties, the spirit of what they believed to be their duty carried them beyond egoism and the instinct of self-preservation. This sanguinary distinction of a decayed society, this general ruin which encouraged every weakness and every vice, revealed many men whom fear drove to commit crime ; no woman's name is associated with such base actions. No doubt, in the mass, there must have been some who, like the men, acted as informers, so efficacious a means to save one's head during the Terror ; but their actions, numbers and personnel must have been very insignificant since history has kept no trace of these facts, while it has

been unable to hide the baseness of the men. It cannot be objected that this is explained by the unimportance of woman in both civil and social life. Since the eighteenth century woman had become a power in France. Right through the century we feel her profound influence which grew with the development of her intelligence. At the end of the century, during the Terror, the revolutionaries after having made use of the enthusiasm, the activity and the indomitable will of the women to initiate the big movements which they could not have produced without them, set to work to confine them once more to the sphere of the household, but it remains none the less true that they themselves could not deny the considerable part which women had taken in the Revolution nor ignore whatever was important in their actions. That is why both the innumerable acts of courage done by women during the Revolution, and the silence of history as to their cowardice, allow us to affirm that their general bravery was unblemished by any serious weakness.

We do not even know the names of many of these women who devoted themselves to their cause with complete self-sacrifice. There are, for example, the women-soldiers who formed an entire corps of "pikemen" and a battalion of grenadiers. The only name which we know with certainty in these corps is that of Alexandrine Barreau.

There are also the fourteen young girls of Verdun, all under sixteen, of whom three were guillotined and the rest condemned to imprisonment for life and the iron collar, when they could have retained their freedom if they had consented to tell a lie. It was at the moment when the army of the Duke of Brunswick was approaching Verdun. Some of the citizens, terrified at the idea of the bloody executions in which the soldiers of Brunswick would probably indulge if they took Verdun, gathered together fourteen young girls from among their compatriots and persuaded them that they would save their city from great calamity if they would offer flowers,

sweets and money to the enemy officers. Too immature to understand that such a step was to enter into relations with the enemy, the girls undertook the mission, believing that they were performing an act of devotion on behalf of their native city. But, on being informed of this, the Committee of General Security caused them to be arrested. The inhabitants of Verdun, moved to pity, obtained their acquittal on account of the youth of the prisoners and the way in which pressure had been brought to bear on them in the name of their love of Verdun, but it was made a condition that, for the sake of example, they should publicly deny the action of which they were accused. These heroic girls preferred death and torture rather than to soil their conscience with a deliberate lie in public.

The maid of a certain Madame Lépenay took advantage of her mistress's absence when the commissaries of the Convention came to arrest her at her house, to go herself before the Committee in place of the mistress whom she served. This simple and noble girl, whose name likewise is unknown to history, was sent to prison and drowned among the *noyades* of the Loire which were ordered by Carrier at Nantes.

The list is long indeed of all these valiant women whose heroism has been recorded by history without their names.

There are also others who gained the passing admiration of their contemporaries and are completely forgotten to-day. Madame Lavergne (*née* Victoire Régnier), for example, the twenty-eight-year-old wife of an old husband, to whom, however, she was so devoted that she had no wish to survive him, for, being childless, she owed a duty to no one else. The commandant Lavergne was entrusted with the defence of Longwy. The Convention accused him of having betrayed his country and delivered the stronghold to the enemy. Old and decrepit, the commandant did not even attempt to defend himself against the charge. So his young wife herself made a passionate defence on his behalf before the Revolutionary

Tribunal. When she saw that her efforts were useless, she cried out at the top of her voice before the whole Tribunal: "Long live the King!" in order that she might mount the scaffold with her beloved husband. He, ill, and over sixty years old, had been carried to the Tribunal and taken back again to the prison in a state of semi-consciousness and was unaware of what had happened. It was only on the fatal tumbrel that he recognised his wife by his side and showed grief and astonishment at beholding her thus condemned to death. She took instant advantage of her husband's recovery of his senses to breathe a tender whisper in his ear: "Do not be afraid, it is your friend who cannot live without you and is following you!"

Again, there is the conjugal and patriotic devotion of Madame Lefort. She obtained permission to bid a last farewell to her husband in prison, but for this visit she took care to wear two complete sets of women's clothing, one of which she gave to her husband: "Go," she said to him, "you can do for our people what I could not do." The next day the executioner found in the cell only a woman rejoicing in her self-sacrifice. "Unhappy woman, what have you done?" said he. "My duty; do yours!" she replied, and she was led away to execution.

The Duchesse de Mouchy sought her husband in the Luxembourg in order that she might be taken with him before the Tribunal and thence to the guillotine.

The Duchesse de Maillé took the place of Mademoiselle de Maillé, her sister-in-law, when the names of the victims who were to enter the tumbrel that day were called. The Duchess died for her sister-in-law, and Thermidor gave Mademoiselle de Maillé her freedom.

Mademoiselle Delleglan, finding it impossible to pay for any means of transport from Lyons to Paris, walked all the way to the capital in order to defend her father who was unjustly accused. She saved Monsieur Delleglan, but died three years later from the effects of the terrible journey, from which she had never recovered.

Quite as touching is the case of Madame Bouquez, this *Girondine* who was ready to suffer the last pangs of hunger and death for her party's sake. Madame Bouquez, a native of the district of Bordeaux, had been settled for many years in Paris, where she lived in peace and happiness down to the time when the *Girondins* were proscribed *en masse* and fled across France. Then her peace was ended and filled with a presentiment that her presence was needed in the Gironde, she started forthwith for Saint-Emilion where she arrived to discover several of the exiles, opened her doors to them, hid them in an underground passage and ate only one day in every three so that she might be able to feed her friends, for food was rationed, and Madame Bouquez was entitled to no more than one pound of bread a day. But she remained cheerful, amiable and smiling, and gossiped with her neighbours in order that they should not suspect her of hiding any *Girondins*. Her banished friends urged her to reflect well that in giving them protection she was exposing herself each day to the danger of death on the scaffold. "That matters little to me," she replied. "But what will become of all of you if I go?" She did in the end go, and later on her protégés were forced to kill themselves, because they could get no food. As to Madame Bouquez, condemned to be guillotined with her husband, she kept to the last her composure and remarkable self-possession, obtaining permission to die after her husband so that he might be spared the distress of seeing her perish.

The utter devotion, timid and silent and sad, of the wife of the most famous of the early heroes of the Revolution, General de la Fayette, is but little known and insufficiently admired. Marie-Adrienne Françoise d'Ayen had in 1774 married at the age of fourteen and a half the Marquis Mortier de la Fayette, who was sixteen years old. Brought up on the creed of duty by her mother, Marie-Adrienne was convinced that woman's destiny is to make her husband happy without having the right to criticise him or to aspire to any joys save those of self-sacrifice. Her duty

to God, her husband and the children that she might have, filled her whole mind. So when, scarcely three years after their marriage, this young and well-loved husband, so admired and so handsome, told the marquise that his inclination and honour alike made it his duty to go and fight for the independence of young America, Marie-Adrienne's heart stood still and a shiver of fear shook her from head to foot. But she admired the noble sentiments of her husband, and, hiding her grief, warmly congratulated him on his lofty resolution. In vain the idea of separation broke her heart ; in vain did she think with compassion of her little girl of fifteen months and of the babe which was to come. She suppressed her suffering and apprehensions lest they should be a hindrance to her husband. She strove to be nothing but his chattel, a thing without will or personality, in order worthily to fulfil her duty as a wife. The Marquis de la Fayette departed in spite of the remonstrances of his king, in spite of the advice of all the members of his family and of his friends, but encouraged by his wife, who suffered to such a degree from his departure that she fell ill.

The marquis was blind to his wife's anguish. Immensely rich, he now took pleasure in devoting his whole attention to the equipment at his own expense of a vessel to carry him to Georgetown. He departed, and Marie-Adrienne would not admit to herself that he had been quite unmoved when they took leave of each other. She even thought, when she was sufficiently mistress of herself to reconsider her first impression, that heroes have hearts of stone when necessary. La Fayette, who was seriously wounded at Brandywine, went, when he had recovered, to fight with the Army of the North in Virginia ; and returned to Europe, not from any anxiety on behalf of his wife and children, but to seek the best means to persuade France and Spain to go to the rescue of America. He had hardly any time to devote to Madame de la Fayette on his return from Paris.

When the Treaty of Paris (1783) ended the struggle in

MARIE PAUL ROCH YVES GILBERT MOTIER, MARQUIS DE LA FAYETTE.
Conclusion of the Campaign of 1781 in Virginia

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America by recognising the independence of the young republic the Marquis de la Fayette was more sorry than glad that his rôle of liberator should have come to an end so soon. But this rôle had made him the most popular man in France, in whom there seemed to be incarnate both the hatred of past abuses and the nascent republican spirit. This also caused intense suffering to the marquise, who was a devoted Royalist, but she told herself that if she were as intelligent as her husband, she would understand that he was right. Henceforward in France the marquis was regarded as the natural leader to initiate reforms and take up the struggle against an oppressive régime, which had to be transformed. For this reason in 1789 La Fayette was elected deputy to the States-General by the nobility of Auvergne. For three years he played the leading or almost the leading part, in the history of the Revolution. Vice-President of the National Assembly on the 14th of July, 1789, he was appointed on the following day general of the National Guard. He it was who presented the tricolour cockade as the emblem of the new France, exclaiming as he displayed it from the balcony of the Town Hall at Paris: "It will go round the world!" And the marquise, whom love and duty had enabled to overcome her former sentiments, now identified herself more and more with her husband's point of view. One side of her family broke with her for this reason, and this little daughter of the Duc de Noailles and of the mistress of the household to Marie-Antoinette when she was dauphine, was treated as a dangerous revolutionary at the court!

The time, however, was not far distant when the Revolution was to turn against the general who at first had been its hero and inspirer. La Fayette dared to denounce the 20th of June, 1792, before the whole Assembly. Immediately hatred gathered against him, and the favourite of yesterday had to flee in order to escape imprisonment. But the marquise, who had not fled with her husband, was thrown into the Terrorist

prisons where she remained until the 2nd of February, 1795.

La Fayette, however, had fared no better by flight than his wife by remaining in Paris. He fell into the hands of soldiers at an Austrian military station, and the Emperor Leopold II held him captive in order to have his revenge from the man of the Revolution, who, between the 6th of October, 1789, and the 20th of June, 1792, had kept King Louis XVI and Queen Marie-Antoinette in semi-captivity at the Tuileries.

The marquis was confined in the fortress of Olmutz, and it was in this same fortress that the marquise, directly she had escaped from the prisons of the Terror, implored the successor of Leopold II, the Emperor Francis II, to allow her and her two daughters to share her husband's captivity.

At first the Austrian emperor refused Madame de la Fayette's request, because he considered her guilty of having encouraged and supported her husband in the path of revolution. But in the end he was won over by Marie-Adrienne's importunity and she and her daughters were thus able to join the general in prison.

This news caused the greatest delight to this devoted and self-sacrificing woman.

"I shall bless the Lord in this land where I am a captive," she exclaimed with rapture when she caught sight of the fortress in which she was going to meet her husband again.

She lived there for two whole years, having for bed, like the general and the young girls, only a straw pallet. Three cells adjoining each other comprised their whole accommodation. A wooden chair was the only seat in each cell, and a stove-pipe which came from the guard-house constituted the only heating of the prison. The prisoners had nothing but coarse food, scarcely sufficient for their needs.

It was the Treaty of Campo-Formio (1797) which gave them their liberty; but they dared not re-enter France

until after the 18th of Brumaire. After their return this heroic wife knew at last happy hours!

A study of "Unknown Women of the Revolution" would be incomplete without an account of another woman of whom Michelet wrote:

"It is a noble sight to see this woman, badly clothed and poor, going from door to door, paying court to servants in order to gain an entry into their masters' houses, to plead her cause before the mighty and to ask for their support."

Her story, which is curious and romantic to the point of improbability, unfolds itself, it is true, a few years before the Revolution, but it had such an influence on the revolutionary outbreak that the heroine of it belongs to this period. The name of this modest and valiant woman is Madame Legros. With the help of her husband, she kept a haberdashery shop in the rue des Fossées Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois. But although in a humble position Madame Legros was widely read. Above all, she had, like all her contemporaries, read Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and, good and compassionate by nature, after reading his works she developed an almost morbid sensibility. The thought of the sufferings of others caused her as much anguish as acute physical pain. Now, one day when Madame Legros had gone on a matter of business some little distance from her shop, she perceived a thick manuscript on the post which stood at the corner of the street in which she lived. Her love of reading caused her to take possession of this manuscript and the following night she sacrificed her sleep in order to read it. The story which the manuscript related was heartbreaking. It purported to be the true memoirs of a prisoner who had been sent to the Bastille in May, 1749, by the caprice of the Marquise de Pompadour and who was still languishing in irons in 1777. Madame Legros, shaking with indignation and grief, imparted her emotion to her husband, and dedicated herself with untiring devotion to the deliverance of the unfortunate victim.

In reality the prisoner whose memoirs Madame Legros had read was very much less interesting than his account would have his readers believe. He was a man who, starting from a lie, had taken advantage of a misunderstanding to get into one equivocal position after another throughout his career, and who had profited by each successive recovery of his liberty, to commit fresh crimes.

Born in the south of France, at Montagnac, of very humble parents, on the 23rd of March, 1725, Danry (as he was named), on growing up, wished to find some means of making his fortune rapidly without working. He was at that time a medical student in Paris, very friendly with one Binguet, a chemist's apprentice. At this time the Marquise de Pompadour was dazzling the court with the radiance of her delicate beauty, her irresistible eyes, her wonderfully lovely face, her fairy-like form and her lofty intelligence ; and she had been officially presented by the Princesse de Conti on the 14th of September, 1745.[1] The two friends told each other that if they denounced a false plot against the favourite they would gain the gratitude of the marquise as well as a reward. So Danry departed to Versailles to betray the imaginary plot. But exactly at this time the minister, Maurepas, had been banished to Bourges, on suspicion of having attempted to poison the marquise. When Danry made his report, he was thought to be one of the subordinate accomplices of Maurepas who, dissatisfied with the sum he had been paid, was trying to obtain money from both sides. D'Argenson, who had supported Maurepas against the favourite, insisted that full light should be thrown on the matter, and Danry, instead of being recompensed as he had hoped, was sent to the Bastille (1st May, 1749). The lieutenant of police, Berryer, chose the ablest of his officers, Saint-

[1] See *Princesses, Ladies and Salonnières of the Reign of Louis XV*, by Thérèse Louis Latour. The chapter on " The Marquise de Pompadour ".

Marc, in order to make Danry divulge all that he knew. Almost simultaneously Binguet was likewise arrested.

At the Bastille, Danry refused to speak. What could he have said ? But the police saw in his silence a proof of the gravity of the plot. Might not this conspiracy be aimed at someone higher than the favourite ? . . . It was absolutely necessary to get to the bottom of it. So Danry was treated with consideration in order to induce him by kindness to relate all that he knew. He was given books, a pipe, tobacco, two room companions, because he said he was bored by himself. Every day two officers from the castle came to see if he had any complaints to make. The unhappy man who had invented everything was wondering how on earth to escape from the questions with which they overwhelmed him, when on the 15th of June, 1751, he succeeded at last in escaping from Vincennes, where he had been transferred.

Immediately after Danry's escape, d'Argenson, much agitated, wrote to the chief of the police : " It is of the highest importance to recapture the prisoner." Danry had succeeded in hiding himself, thanks to the friendship of a pretty girl, Anne Benoist, whom he had known in his student days. But soon, at the end of his resources, the fugitive from Vincennes wrote to Dr. Quesnay for help in the name of justice and of the unmerited sufferings which he had endured.

Quesnay, acquainted with the Danry affair, immediately sent the letter to the police, and the adventurer was led back to the Bastille. There our gentleman met another adventurer of his own kind, a certain Allègre of Marseilles, who had been arrested for reasons similar to those which had caused his own imprisonment. The two birds of a feather made friends, and Allègre, a former schoolmaster, and intelligent, contrived a plan of escape for them both, which was successful on the night of the 25th–26th of February, 1756.

The two fugitives succeeded in passing the frontier and Danry succeeded in entering the service of a rich citizen of

Amsterdam. But Saint-Marc, disguised as an Armenian merchant, discovered him and took him back to the Bastille, where this time he did not meet with the same consideration. He was thrown into a dungeon, where he expiated his second escapade.

Already Danry had become a person of minor interest at court. Now, when the date of Maurepas' exile to Bourges was becoming remote, when the Marquise de Pompadour, already ill, was having to multiply her efforts to keep her influence over the king, and the successive disasters of the Seven Years' War were overwhelming France, the fictitious plot in which Danry had taken part lost its interest and importance. Gradually the prisoner of 1749 became a shadowy personage whose story and crimes were only vaguely known. After the Marquise de Pompadour, the only favourite to die at the royal palace of Versailles, had been replaced by the very pretty and impudent Madame Dubarry (1764) neither the police nor the government troubled to make any serious investigation into the Danry case. The prisoner was transferred a second time to the Bastille at Vincennes some months after the death of the marquise, and, thanks to the small attention paid to him, he was able to change his identity.

Danry discovered at Vincennes the papers of a lieutenant-colonel of Dragoons, a native of Languedoc, who had died at Sedan on the 31st of January, 1761. The name of this lieutenant-colonel was Henri Vissec de la Tude. Danry made up his mind that if he claimed to be this man's son, he would be able to enter the ranks of the nobility, especially if he represented the officer as a *vicomte,* although he was really only a *chevalier.* Thoroughly accustomed to lying as he was, it was easier for him to claim relationship since it was impossible for the dead to contradict him. Behold him then as a viscount and under a name which had never in fact existed, for as the result of an error he called the dead man Masers de la Tude, while in reality the officer's name was Vissec

de la Tude. This operation being successfully carried through, the new viscount began to think of his third escape. He succeeded in accomplishing it on the 23rd of November, 1765, while he was taking his daily walk in the moats of the donjon at Vincennes.

But once again the police lured the prisoner into a trap, and the Vicomte de la Tude was brought back to prison. On the 27th of September, 1775, he was even transferred to Charenton as mentally deranged. Established again at Vincennes, which was the prison of the nobility and political delinquents, he had the good fortune and ability to win over by his falsehoods and the dramatic recital of his exploits and woes, the Chevalier de Moyria, a man of warm sympathies, related to the highest nobility of France. The Chevalier had hardly left Vincennes before he worked upon his mother, their great friend, Mercier de Saint-Vigor, Rear-Admiral and Comptroller of the queen's household, and on many other friends, to obtain the freedom and rehabilitation of the Vicomte de la Tude.

King Louis XVI yielded to the prayers of all these friends of the viscount, and, on the 5th of June, 1777, signed an order for the release of the prisoner, to whom at the same time he offered money compensation. The false La Tude emerged from prison a demi-hero, and the Maréchal de Beauveau offered him his warm and influential friendship.

But it was decreed that Danry La Tude, who was then fifty-two years old, should never seek an honest means to gain his living. He could have found one at that time thanks to the ardent sympathy which the Maréchal de Beauveau felt for him. La Tude preferred, however, to attempt to extort by threats a very large sum from a lady of quality. For this adventure he took the name of Jedor, and it was under this name that the police conducted him to Bicêtre on the 16th of July, 1777, exactly a month and eleven days after he had left Vincennes.

It was now that the impostor set to work to write those heartrending memoirs which were to upset the calm and

regular life of the sentimental and hard-working little haberdasher in the rue des Fossées-Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois.

Danry piled up in the memoirs the most flamboyant and harrowing descriptions of all the sufferings that his imagination could suggest. He described in extravagant terms the moral torture of an honest man who is accused of crimes which he abhors and of which he is unable to prove his innocence. But in spite of the injustices of which he showed himself to be the victim, the writer remained a lover of mankind. He pitied more than he blamed those who had made him suffer and desired their reform as much as his own liberty.

Those memoirs, as poignant as though written with his heart's blood, Danry La Tude caused to be given by the gaolers, to whom he promised a handsome reward, to all whom he thought likely to interest themselves in his fictitious woes and tortures. It was one of these gaolers who, when drunk, had placed a copy of the memoirs on the post where Madame Legros picked it up.

The tender-hearted little haberdasher forthwith renounced the happiness of domestic life, the little working-class comforts which she had succeeded in providing for her family and herself, the pleasant profits which she had the gift of making in her shop. She confided the whole management of their business to her husband, who admired her resolution, and gave herself up entirely to the work of restoring to liberty the martyr of Bicêtre.

She went from door to door begging for action, for efforts, for moral assistance, for sympathy. She received a particularly kind hearing in judicial circles. President Gourgues and president de Lamoignōn showed interest and even enthusiasm for her cause. Cardinal de Rohan was ready to help her with his activity and his money. The minister Sartines promised to give the matter his close and sympathetic attention. Several *avocats* were, like their presidents, stirred to pity and indignation on behalf of La Tude.

At the same time, the valiant Madame Legros devoted her savings, as well as the money which she had collected, to having numbers of copies of the memoirs which she had found printed. As soon as the copies were ready they were distributed in all the drawing-rooms in Paris, in the provinces and even in those of the queen.

People were touched by the accents of that unhappy voice. The Marquis de Villette felt passionate sympathy for the unfortunate prisoner. He sent his steward to Bicêtre to offer La Tude a pension of six hundred francs on the sole condition that the martyr would allow him the honour of handing it to him himself.

But La Tude was too practised in turning occasions to account to fail to profit by the present one in a way much more advantageous than the mere acceptance of a pension of six hundred francs from the Marquis de Villette. "For two years now," he replied to the steward, "this heroic woman has devoted herself to my deliverance; I should be ungrateful indeed if I did not leave my fate in her hands."

The so-called La Tude had a sense for effect, and knew how to turn his popularity to account.

The Académie française and d'Alembert both pronounced in favour of the prisoner. Streams of visitors arrived every day at Bicêtre to see and console La Tude. The governor of the prison, touched by such demonstrations, made no objection to this testimony of affection and devotion.

Finally, public opinion forced Louis XVI himself to look into the question of La Tude. He sent for the file, examined it carefully, and, after a complete study of the documents, declared that La Tude could never leave prison.

The king's formal refusal to set La Tude at liberty, far from discouraging the energies and hope of Madame Legros, strengthened them and gave a fresh impetus to her campaign. The tireless instigator of the defence of La Tude now directed her efforts towards Madame Necker and

succeeded in gaining her support. Better still, Madame Legros secured partisans in the circle of Marie-Antoinette, who was won over, thanks to the tenacity and devotion of this humble woman, and the queen profited by the accession to power of her protégé, Breteuil, to get the king to sign La Tude's release on the 24th of March, 1784.

At the same time the viscount obtained from the king a pension of four hundred francs. He made his home with Monsieur and Madame Legros. If he did not enjoy luxury in the house of these quiet working-people, he enjoyed at least the wholesome comforts with which that most skilled and active of housewives provided him. From the very first day Madame Legros took the greatest care of him, mothering and spoiling him, and surrounding him with a thousand delicate attentions, which her kind heart bade him look upon in the light of compensation, very inadequate, no doubt, but absolutely due to her hero, for his past misery.

Thanks to the intervention of the Duchesse de Beauveau, the minister de Calonne allowed Madame Legros for the maintenance of her protégé an annual pension of six hundred francs, drawn from the fund reserved for gentlemen who had fallen on evil days. The Duchesse de Kingston personally paid to Madame Legros, for the same purpose, another pension of six hundred francs. La Tude received five hundred francs a year from president Dupaty and three hundred from the Duc d'Ayen. Ever indefatigable, Madame Legros got up a public subscription which brought in considerable sums. Thus this woman by her boundless devotion procured not only liberty but also a comfortable living for the man whom she considered a hero worthy of all admiration and pity.

On the same day on which Louis XVI signed La Tude's release, the Académie française bestowed the Monthyon prize on the valiant and disinterested woman who, out of kindness of heart and compassion for the wrongs of another, and he a stranger who was nothing to her, had

for many years suffered cold and fatigue, privations and moral humiliations and the contemptuous ridicule of insolent servants.

Had Madame Legros only known, the worthlessness of her hero was to cause her far more suffering than all that she had borne to gain his freedom. The false La Tude remained after his triumph what he had always been : a despicable man and a liar, capable, should an opportunity offer, of no matter what crime.

At the first gathering of the revolutionary storm he sought safety in England, without troubling in the least about the fate of his benefactors and in particular of the compassionate and splendid woman who had made so many sacrifices for his cause.

But if, after passing the frontier, the impostor meant to forget his evil deeds, France could not, like him, rid herself of the bad influence which his lies had exerted on men's minds. There were many who, at the beginning of the Revolution, hated royalty the more because La Tude's sufferings had been so severe. Men's minds, inflamed by the passions of the time, blazed when they remembered the memoirs of La Tude, sacrificed to the favourite's caprice. They found in this injustice an excuse for the worst acts of political violence. A story, rendered admirable by the sincerity and disinterested conduct of a woman, served as a pretext for horrible and unjust acts of vengeance. Madame Legros is certainly a heroine, but her heroism was fatal to France and the Republic, because it consecrated lies which attributed to the dying régime injustices and cruelties of which it had never been guilty, and which, as a result, favoured reprisals for what were mere legends, and tarnished without either profit or excuse the new era that was just beginning.

THE PRINCESSE DE LAMBALLE

Marie-Thérèse Louise of Savoy-Carignan was an exceedingly pretty, very innocent and very ingenuous little princess, when, on the morning of the 7th of January, 1767, she changed, at the age of sixteen, her name of Carignan for that of the Princesse de Lamballe. Lost in her sumptuous gown of stiff white satin, very much amused by the etiquette of a marriage by proxy at which one of her brothers played the part of the absent bridegroom, Marie-Thérèse was married, in the closet of the King of Savoy, her uncle, as happy as she was surprised to be henceforth a French princess of the blood royal.

The young princess had not had a particularly exciting youth, because her family was poor, although so near to the throne of Savoy. But this child, devoid of ambition and possessing an affectionate and kind nature, had been very happy in the simple, bourgeois life which she had lived with her nurse who had spoilt her, her mother, who was more maternal than distinguished, and her numerous brothers and sisters with whom she had played to her heart's content. In this family circle, Marie-Thérèse of Savoy-Carignan had remained in ignorance of the world, of grand fêtes, of expensive pleasures, of the intrigues of the great, and of romantic sentiments. Neither had she ever known any real sorrow, any serious disappointments, anything morally painful. She had never come in direct contact with evil, or with great fortunes. She was just a natural, open-hearted child who saw everything through rose-coloured spectacles; she grew like some fair tree which puts forth healthy shoots; loving and sweet, she never doubted that the future had happiness in store for her.

MARIE-THÉRÈSE LOUISE OF SAVOY-CARIGNAN
PRINCESS DE LAMBALLE

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The bridegroom to whom she had just been united was a stranger to the princess. But the French ambassador, Choiseul, who had arranged the marriage, assured her that the Prince de Lamballe was the handsomest, most agreeable prince in the world, and Marie-Thérèse believed him. It had also been explained to her that he was related to King Louis XV, since he was the great-grandson of Louis XIV and of Madame de Montespan. Choiseul had likewise spoken to the bride of the Prince de Lamballe's rights as a "legitimatised descendant." Marie-Thérèse did not understand very well what was meant by these "rights", nor what was the exact meaning of "legitimatised descendants", who had the right to call themselves princes of the blood royal, but who were not royal in the same way as the others. But she did not think it necessary to inquire. It was enough to know that her husband was agreeable, handsome, enormously wealthy and of Bourbon blood.

Her father-in-law, the Duc de Penthièvre, settled on her an annual income of thirty thousand francs for her private purse and presented her with seventy-five thousand francs' worth of precious stones. All this dazzled the young bride to whom her father could give no *dot*, and who took away with her from the paternal home only a small, plain trousseau.

So this newly-made Princesse de Lamballe was happy, despite the heartache caused by the separation from her family, when on the afternoon of the 17th of January, 1767, she left Turin to journey to France. She was accompanied by Piedmontese ladies, who were to leave her at the frontier.

On the 25th of January the Princesse de Lamballe crossed the French frontier, and on that same day her Piedmontese suite left her. As had happened on a former occasion when, in 1696, Marie-Adelaïde of Savoy had married the Duc de Bourgogne, grandson of Louis XIV, Marie-Thérèse Louise of Savoy-Carignan, now the Princesse de Lamballe, had to submit to the ceremony

of " transformation " symbolised by a change of apparel. But, while in 1696 it was in a coach drawn up right in the middle of the bridge of Beauvoisin that Marie-Adelaïde divested herself of everything that she wore made in Savoy [1] in order to don clothes and ornaments which were entirely French in origin, the Princesse de Lamballe made the change in the French monastery nearest to the frontier.

The father superior, accompanied by his monks bearing a banner before them, came to receive the young princess on her entry into France. The procession escorted Marie-Thérèse to the monastery door, over which had been erected a triumphal arch of welcome. There a French major-domo conducted the princess to the largest room in the monastery which had been sumptuously furnished for the occasion. There were spread out, artistically and skilfully arranged, numerous gorgeous gowns as well as the most enchanting and elaborate underlinen presented by the Duc de Penthièvre and the Prince de Lamballe to the young wife. There, also, awaited her, drawn up in order of rank, the enormous suite of ladies and gentlemen who had been sent by her father-in-law and her husband to form an escort for the bride.

After the " transformation " had been effected and the princess had rested, the journey was continued. The princess was to meet her husband at Nangis in Brie on the 31st of January. It was here, also, that the marriage by proxy, which had taken place on the 17th of January at Turin, was to be ratified. All the towns through which the princess passed seemed to vie with one another in the warmth, display and enthusiasm of their welcome. Marie-Thérèse was amazed. She had never dreamed of such demonstrations, nor that people would incur such expense in order to manifest their delight and sympathy with their guests. Completely dazzled by the

[1] See *Princesses, Ladies and Adventuresses of the Reign of Louis XIV*, by Th. Louis Latour Chapter on " The Duchesse de Bourgogne ".

princely gifts from her husband and her father-in-law, she felt in the middle of the receptions which had been arranged in her honour, that she must pinch herself to see if it was really all true or if she were not under the spell of a fascinating and wonderful hallucination.

But the most disturbing and thrilling emotion she was to feel on this triumphal journey across France lay still before her. The Prince de Lamballe, impatient to see his princess, wished to anticipate their first meeting but without letting himself be known. Wearing the attractive costume of a page, he begged the town of Montereau to allow him to present a bouquet to the princess at the gate of the city. Not during the whole of the journey had Marie-Thérèse seen such a handsome and charming young man. The courtesy and emotion with which he presented the beautiful bouquet, the tender expression of his eyes, at once caressing and passionate, as he gazed at her, moved her profoundly and agreeably. How I hope, she said to herself, that my prince will be a little like this wonderful young man ! . . .

The next day they reached Nangis. What must not have been the princess's joy when she discovered in the handsome and disturbing young page at Montereau her husband ! The admiration of the bride and bridegroom was reciprocal. So, mutually fascinated, they went to the altar in a transport of love and delight, there to receive the second blessing which should join their lives together for eternity.

Marie-Thérèse de Lamballe's heart was overflowing with happiness and radiant hopes when she arrived at the splendid " Hôtel de Toulouse " which had been the prince's family mansion ever since Madame de Montespan had given it to the Prince de Lamballe's grandfather, the Comte de Toulouse, born in 1678, the natural son of Louis XIV and of the Marquise de Montespan.[1] (This

[1] See *Princesses, Ladies and Adventuresses of the Reign of Louis XIV*, by Thérèse Louis Latour. The Chapter on " Madame de Montespan ".

magnificent building is to-day the offices of the Bank of France.) That same evening, the princes of the blood, as well as all the ladies and gentlemen of the high nobility of France, sat down to a royal banquet at the Hôtel de Toulouse given in honour of the young couple.

When Marie-Thérèse de Lamballe and Louis Alexandre de Bourbon Lamballe appeared, walking lovingly side by side, in the salons where the Duc de Penthièvre's guests awaited them, everyone thought that they made an ideal pair.

The little princess was beaming : her eyes sparkled with pleasure. She captivated everybody with her freshness, her pretty clear complexion, her thick fair hair which reached to the ground. Her very frank blue eyes were speckled with little black spots which gave a curious expression to her open countenance. Her forehead was too narrow and her mouth too small ; but she constantly smiled, and if her features were too tiny and lacking in regularity, they were so pleasant that they charmed. Her *gaucherie* only added to her child-like grace. Her hands were rather red, like the hands of healthy children who have lived a good deal in the open air. Everything about her betrayed a young and naïve princess, ignorant of worldly arts, but at the time this was one of her chief attractions.

In contrast to this dainty *ingénue*, who was one big smile, her husband was tall, fragile and thin. He had a striking pair of dark-blue eyes. The lines of his pale, already worn face, spoke of a capacity for intense passion. His delicate profile and his aristocratic bearing were exceedingly distinguished ; the bright smile that lit up his countenance that evening was, as a rule, bitter and disillusioned. In short, although the Prince de Lamballe was very handsome, his appearance was such as to create a disquieting impression rather than to arouse admiration, to cause apprehension rather than to inspire confidence.

This impression is explained by his past. Notwith-

standing his youth (he was only twenty) the prince had already drunk deeply of the cup of coarse and vicious pleasures. In the company of the Duc de Chartres and other libertines of his world, he had frequented the houses of women of easy virtue and was acquainted with the love that can be bought. To put a stop to this licentious life the Duc de Penthièvre, his father, was anxious to marry him early to this pure and exceedingly healthy child, who seemed to bring with her innocence and the breath of spring.

For that matter the Prince de Lamballe appeared that evening to be very much taken with the fair girl whom he had just married, and Marie-Thérèse was head over ears in love with her husband. So much so, that two distressing incidents at the wedding-dinner which would have painfully affected a superstitious person or one less under the thrall of love than the princess, left her quite indifferent. One of the incidents was the bad news which arrived at the beginning of the banquet about the return journey of the Piedmontese ladies who had accompanied the princess as far as the French frontier. The avalanches of snow, the fear of being blocked in the mountains and the fractured limbs of two of the ladies had complicated and prolonged this return journey whose difficulties had been as physically painful as they were alarming. The young wife was even less upset by the second incident, which occurred at the very table itself. The Prince de Conti had been put next to the lovely Madame de Forcalquier. The lady's potent and attractive charms, coupled with the influence of generous wines, so intoxicated the prince that he had to be removed from the table in order to save his fair neighbour's dignity and virtue. To all this the princess paid scarcely any heed.

After this dinner, she lived three weeks of such passionate happiness, of a life so different from any which she had known and experienced before her marriage, that it seemed to her she had never begun to live

until the day when she saw the handsome page at Montereau.

At the end of these three weeks there arose in Marie-Thérèse's mind a faint suspicion that the prince was less attentive, less devoted, more reserved. But she did not want to think so ; she refused to disturb a happiness which enveloped her completely and which she adored. Nay, more, in order to remove any shadow of proof that her fears were correct, she went much more often to the court, which she had avoided during the first days of her married life, attended the fêtes regularly and thus escaped opportunities of observing whether her husband sought her as eagerly as he did in the weeks which had just gone by. But it was in vain that the princess tried to throw dust in her own eyes. After several weeks of attempted self-deception, the banal and cruel truth was forced upon her.

The prince had returned to his former habits. He had left his young wife to go back to his more experienced mistresses, and to-day an actress at the Comédie Française, Mademoiselle La Chassaigne, had just announced to the Duc de Penthièvre and to the Princesse de Lamballe that "honoured by the favour of the Prince," it would not be long before she brought into the world a child for whom she begged the duke and the princess to be good enough to provide. The Duc de Penthièvre paid a large sum to La Chassaigne as hush money and for the needs of her expected child as well. But the princess fell into a state of disenchantment bordering on prostration. The blow was so great and so unexpected that for the moment it destroyed her taste for living and her belief in happiness.

But since she was young and light-hearted her sense of propriety and her ignorance of the depravities of life, as well as her father-in-law's affectionate, fortifying and wholesome influence, would very soon have roused her from her despondency, if, almost the very next day after Mademoiselle La Chassaigne's communication, she

had not learned of her husband's other follies. She learned that he had also intimate relations with Mademoiselle Gendry of the Opera and that this intrigue did not, any more than that with Mademoiselle La Chassaigne, prevent the prince from supping frequently with women who had still less to recommend them than either the singer or the actress; that he went with the Duc de Chartres and other great rakes of the period, young and old, to the lewd parties at the *petites maisons* where everything but respectability was permissible. Such filthy debauchery caused the refined, sensitive and pure young wife to shudder with horror and disgust. She suffered fearfully, even physically, when she learned at the same time of her husband's shameful behaviour and of the existence of the vices in which he indulged himself. This first and terrible shock impaired the splendid constitution of a healthy and care-free child which had been hers, and brought on that acute nervous malady which was later to involve her in so much intrigue and ingratitude.

But the prince, now that he had shaken himself free of the spell cast over him for a short time by his young wife's charm, gave himself up to a life of vice with all the impetuosity of a passionate nature, uncurbed by a will so weak as to be almost non-existent, or, rather, which only existed to drive him farther and farther along the path of folly.

Neither advice nor prayers, nor tears, had any effect on the prince's conduct. Indeed, he had the vanity of his faults. He was pleased when his mistresses and the nicety of his choice were discussed. But this nicety was not concerned with their beauty, or even their youth. He required them above all else to be experienced and appreciated them all the more, the more manifold the sensations they could procure for him and the more expert they were in the art of exciting his passion. To satisfy his need of sensual enjoyment the Prince de Lamballe did not even stop short of crime. One day

he went so far as to steal his wife's jewels in order to give them to the *fille* La Forest whose dissolute life was the talk of all Paris. The princess herself discovered the theft. Alarmed by a terrible suspicion which put her at once on the track of the real culprit, she kept silent over her loss and hid her anguish. But the *fille* La Forest, who preferred money to these exceedingly beautiful jewels, threw herself at the feet of the Duc de Penthièvre, saying that it was to pay her debts that the Prince de Lamballe had given her the jewels, and that recognising them as family jewels, she did not wish to keep them. The duke caused them to be valued by an expert and he then gave La Forest their worth in money on condition that she would never see the prince again and that she would leave France immediately. She went to Russia, where she probably continued to make dupes, and the princess, thankful for her departure, tried to win back her husband. Without reproaches or recrimination, she surrounded him with the most affectionate and attentive care. But in vain. A few days later the prince again left her and this time to set up house with a certain La Cour, nick-named " La Rousse," a frequent habituée of the prison of Saint-Lazare. With this girl the prince resumed his former orgies, in an even more extravagant form, until one day when he was rashly prancing round the carriage in which La Rousse was seated, and which he had presented to her, he had a terrible fall from his horse.

The life that he had led for five or six years and the gravity of the fall at once caused his condition to be dangerous. The doctors did not hide from the Duc de Penthièvre the serious nature of the case. The unhappy father, who had only this son to carry on the name of his race, who had never got over the premature death of a wife as charming as she was beloved, and who loved his son passionately, in spite of the young man's faults, refused to believe in such a catastrophe as his possible death. He implored the doctors to leave no stone un-

turned in their efforts to save the prince, to force nature to restore him to health. His grief was painful to see and the doctors, in pity for it, resolved to try a last resort. They decided to amputate that part of the young man's leg which was the most severely injured. At this period when anæsthetics were unknown the sufferings arising out of such an operation were fearful. So terribly did the prince suffer that the whole neighbourhood heard his heartrending screams. They were so piercing and so painful that they threw the princess into shuddering fits and spasms.

At this time, Marie-Thérèse de Lamballe, whom trouble had pursued so unmercifully and with such relentless fury, was no longer the smiling child that she had been when she first arrived in Paris. She was thinner; suffering had sharpened her features; she seemed to have suddenly become a woman and she had grown more beautiful. But the smile which then lighted up her face had forsaken her lips. Her eyes were drowned in tears which she had shed for months and which had left their traces on the delicate softness of her eyelids. Her signs of good health had given place to a nervousness, and a physical condition that was easily irritated and annoyed. Her sensibility was affected by everything. She suffered from melancholia and continual convulsions. The doctors were uneasy about her at the same time as they despaired of her husband's life. The wife had a well-marked nervous complaint, the prince was beyond all hope of recovery.

But the Duc de Penthièvre still refused to abandon hope. He had the young man moved to his estate at Louveciennes in order that he might get more air, more sun and be more at liberty to cry out. Both father and wife devoted themselves to the invalid with a determination to make him well that neither the little princess's malady nor the duke's despair could shake.

But nothing could stay the advance of the gloomy Reaper. The Prince de Lamballe died on Friday, the

6th May, 1768, after enduring unspeakable agonies. He was not yet twenty-two, and he had been married less than seventeen months.

After her husband's funeral, the princess retired, according to the custom of the day, to a convent, there to pass the first months of her widowhood. She chose the Abbey of Saint-Antoine des Champs whose abbess was Gabrielle Charlotte de Beauvau, a woman of great good sense and of real intelligence. Under the direction of the abbess, Marie-Thérèse de Lamballe recovered her peace of mind. The abbess soothed the horror that the young woman still felt at the remembrance of her husband's vices, and pointed out to her that in life things are not so simple as Marie-Thérèse had believed at the side of her mother and of her nurse. The abbess sought also to control the princess's sensibility which had been irritated and exasperated by trouble, and, little by little, the young woman returned to an almost normal state of health.

She had only recovered her tranquillity a short time, when the Duc de Penthièvre begged her to resume her life under his roof in order to be the friend and counsellor of his daughter, Marie-Adelaïde de Bourbon Penthièvre. The duke was so crushed and grieved by his son's death that he considered it would be unjust and cruel to inflict the weight of his sorrow on his daughter who was still so young, by condemning her to a life of solitude at his side. Marie-Thérèse had been sorely bruised by her husband's behaviour, his illness and his death. She had felt an intense and morbid disgust in learning of certain vices and certain offences whose existence she had never suspected at Savoy ; but she was not in the least inconsolable over the prince's death. Her husband had too completely disappointed her, after having fascinated and charmed her, for her love to withstand such tremendous and painful shocks as it had sustained. Neither was she made for the austerities of the cloister. Her exuberant spirits drew her anew to a life of pleasure as soon as

her health was completely re-established. It was because she felt all this vaguely, that the princess hastened to comply with her father-in-law's wishes. She had been at the Abbey Saint-Antoine des Champs a few months only, but she left it physically much stronger than when she first went there, and morally more tolerant and better instructed in the ways of life.

When the Princesse de Lamballe came out of Saint-Antoine des Champs the Penthièvres installed themselves in the Château de Rambouillet, another of the Marquise de Montespan's gifts to the son of the Comte de Toulouse.[1] It would have been unbecoming to return so soon to Paris and live at the Hôtel de Toulouse; moreover, the quiet of Rambouillet suited the duke's dejected spirits.

The two sisters-in-law lived at Rambouillet in perfect harmony and were the best of friends. Marie-Thérèse taught Marie-Adelaïde to dance. Indeed, there was much more dancing at the château than pleased the sorrowful duke. After a long solitary walk the inconsolable father would return home to say to his daughter-in-law with a shade of reproach in his voice: "Marie, you madcap, how many quadrilles have you danced to-day?" The number was always more than the duke would have liked, although he knew how innocent these dances were and that she whom out of fatherly love he sometimes called "Marie the Madcap" was christened "the good Angel of Penthièvre" by the unhappy and sick in the district. To them Marie-Thérèse devoted the greater part of her time, affection and energy.

On the 1st of January, 1769, Marie-Adelaïde de Bourbon Penthièvre's marriage with Louis-Philippe Joseph, Duc de Chartres, son of the Duc d'Orléans and former boon companion of the Prince de Lamballe, put an end to the pleasant family life at the Château de Rambouillet. Henceforth the Princesse de Lamballe went constantly

[1] See the chapter "Three Ladies at Supper", in *Princesses, Ladies and Salonnières of the Reign of Louis XV*, by Thérèse Louis Latour.

to the court and King Louis XV showed his pleasure in seeing her there. She had the power to dispel with a passing gleam of sunshine the melancholia of this listless monarch, who was never able to struggle against boredom by himself.

Despite her widow's weeds, Marie-Thérèse de Lamballe, at that time, seemed still a child not yet grown up. She had all the charm and bashfulness of youth. There was nothing provocative or cajoling in her eyes, but the serenity of her expression, the fragrance of purity and goodness which she exhaled, her modest attractiveness, began by pleasing and soon ended by charming. The daughters of Louis XV, in particular Madame Adelaïde, the most intelligent and active among them after Madame Louise (in religion, Sister Thérèse of Saint-Augustin), saw in the Princesse de Lamballe's attractions the possibility of detaching their father from the influence exerted over him by Madame Du Barry, who, the king's mistress since 1764, had just been officially presented at court on the occasion of Mademoiselle de Penthièvre's marriage (1769). Madame Adelaïde even endeavoured to make the king marry the Princesse de Lamballe.[1] But whatever pleasure Louis may have taken in contrasting the charms of the favourite and the princess, he was not sufficiently enamoured of the young widow to sacrifice the fascinating Du Barry on her account. Madame Adelaïde's scheme fell through, and after the rebuff the Duc de Penthièvre made his daughter-in-law withdraw herself for a time from the court.

She did not return there until the arrival at Compiègne of the Archduchess Marie-Antoinette, who, on the 19th of April, 1770, had been married by proxy at Vienna to the dauphin of France.[2] The archduchess arrived on

[1] See the chapter on "The Daughters of Louis XV", in *Princesses, Ladies and Salonnières of the Reign of Louis XV*, by Thérèse Louis Latour.

[2] See the chapter on "The Private Life of Marie-Antoinette", in *Princesses, Ladies and Salonnières*, by Thérèse Louis Latour.

the 3rd of May, 1770, and the Princesse de Lamballe was presented to her on that same evening. The young widow helped the other ladies to put her to bed. The next day she accompanied her to Saint-Denis, dined with her at La Muette and was present at all the marriage fêtes. She also just missed being a victim of the dreadful accident in which a hundred and thirty-two persons were buried in the *fosses* of the Place Louis XV on the 3rd of January, 1771.

But at their first meetings the dauphine and the princess did not take any special notice of each other. It was not until Madame de Lamballe appeared at the private Monday balls arranged by Madame de Noailles, a relative of the Duc de Penthièvre and mistress of the dauphine's household, that Marie-Antoinette's attention was caught by the young widow. The future sovereign was looking for a friend. The solitude to which she was relegated by her husband, an ungracious, blunt and taciturn character, despite his real kindness ; the hardly disguised hostility of her aunts, Louis XV's daughters ; the dignity of her position, her foreign ways as well as her affectionate and gentle nature, coupled with the numberless petty court intrigues, all drove her to seek a safe friend to whom she could confide her wishes and her difficulties, her schemes and her joys, as well as her plans for amusement and her need of gaiety.

It seemed to the dauphine that in the Princesse de Lamballe she could find such a friend. The same traits which had attracted King Louis XV to the young woman : her modest and natural air, her candour, her kindness, a total absence of affectation and dissimulation, and a radiant serenity, captured also Marie-Antoinette's affections and attention. Then, too, these two young women had things in common. Both had been disappointed in their marriage, both were foreigners and both, young and bursting with health, had need of pleasure and life.

At first Marie-Antoinette thought she had found the desired friend in the Duchesse de Pecquigny, then in the

Duchesse de Chaulnes, but she had been parted from both of them, and Madame de Saint-Mégrin, who was profoundly antipathetic to her, had been forced upon her. The choice of the Duc de Penthièvre's good and sweet daughter-in-law, so modest and pleasant, would make up for all the intrigues that had been carried on to oppose the young dauphine's inclinations.

At the beginning of this friendship it was Marie-Antoinette who made all the running. Naturally more expansive than the young widow, who as a rule talked but little and could express an opinion on only a very limited number of subjects, the dauphine, who was, moreover, much quicker witted than the princess (whose best friends confessed that she had "enough mind for a pretty woman"), not only made the first advances, but also took the initiative in the confidences, demonstrations of affection, and protestations of the happiness which she felt in being alone with her dear Lamballe. She created numerous opportunities for seeing her, for the pursuit of amusements together, for telling her all her experiences and desires, in short for bringing her as much into her life as possible. But when Marie-Thérèse did take up this friendship she did so with all her heart and for ever. From now onwards her sole real happiness was to love Marie-Antoinette, to please her, to see and admire her, to serve her, to devote herself to her, to make of her an adored idol by whom she was fascinated and in whom she never discovered any fault!

Henceforth this twenty-year-old widow of a husband whose love had only endured three weeks, when he cast her on one side, finished with, and of no use in the world, had not only an object in life but a mission of ideal friendship, made up of gratitude and admiration, of sweetness and that sense of duty with which the hearts of loyal subjects are filled for their sovereigns. Marie-Antoinette became the centre and goal of the Princesse de Lamballe's life. Outside this friendship, whose duties

she understood so well, whose sweets she tasted with such delight, everything seemed irksome to the loving and devoted daughter-in-law of the Duc de Penthièvre. She, who up till then had never been entirely happy at court because she neither could nor would ridicule or backbite, was now constantly drawn thither and immensely enjoyed being there in consequence of the dauphine's affection and fascination, and of their community of tastes and inclinations.

It was in the January of 1772 that the two friends began to go out together unescorted, radiant with happiness and youth. During the frosty days of winter they were to be seen laughing merrily in their sleigh, resplendent in sables and ermine, leaving behind them in the dazzled eyes of the Parisians a vision of elegance and grace. Both danced to perfection, and were passionately fond of dancing together. They went in each other's company to horse-races, both showing the keenest enthusiasm for this form of amusement. Their lives were now merged in each other, dominated by their mutual happiness in being together.

In 1773 the marriage of the dauphin's brothers with two of the Princesse de Lamballe's sisters brought the two friends even closer together. When on the 4th of May, 1774, King Louis XV, struck down by the terrible malady which carried him off, was persuaded by his father confessor to dismiss Madame du Barry, from whom he had great difficulty in parting, Madame de Lamballe was the first to whom Marie-Antoinette imparted the great news. In a word, the two young women shared each other's experiences and lived them over again together.

But the dauphine was now on the eve of becoming queen. Louis XV grew continually worse and breathed his last on the 10th of May, 1774, in spite of the endless devotion with which his daughters nursed him, and Marie-Antoinette succeeded to the throne with her husband, now Louis XVI. During the first days of mourning the Princesse de Lamballe deemed it wise to

keep in the background. She accompanied the Duc de Penthièvre to Brittany, where he went to preside at the meeting of the Estates of Brittany. But on the third day she was recalled by the queen. Lamballe rushed back and immediately on her arrival at Versailles she was ushered into the sovereign's private closet. What was her intense and delighted surprise when she perceived, hanging above the large glass which ornamented the mantelpiece, a portrait of herself, which Marie-Antoinette had hastened to have painted during her short absence. The two women then vowed never to leave each other again, for both had suffered profoundly during their brief separation.

They resumed the life which they had led before the death of Louis XV in so far as the court mourning and the queen's new duties permitted it. Marie-Antoinette, whose influence over the king was all-powerful, obtained an annual pension of thirty thousand francs and the command of an infantry regiment for the princess's youngest brother.

This favour granted so soon, was frowned at by the court and did the princess much harm. But neither she nor the queen noticed it and when the court went out of mourning the two young women, avid for pleasures and distractions, again sought amusements on every possible occasion.

On the 13th of July, 1775, the queen wrote to Baron Rosenberg in Austria: "I have asked the king to let me have Lamballe as *surintendante*. He has consented! You can imagine my delight! Not only will it please my closest friend, but I shall be even more delighted than herself. It is a secret. . . ." This position of *surintendante* (superintendent of the queen's household) Marie-Antoinette caused to be revived with a salary attached of fifteen thousand a year.[1]

[1] See the chapter "The Private Life of Marie-Antoinette", in *Princesses, Ladies and Salonnières of the Reign of Louis XV*, by Thérèse Louis Latour.

Thus, out of friendship for the princess, Queen Marie-Antoinette burdened the treasury with a large annual expenditure. At a time when France was suffering from terrible financial difficulties, she caused, to the general astonishment, the revival of an almost useless post, which the economical and sensible Marie Leczinska had had the good sense to abolish more than thirty years previously. This foolish and extravagant act had an even worse reception than the favour accorded to the Princesse de Lamballe's young brother. There were murmurs, complaints and intrigues against the revival of this function. Despite everything, on the 19th of September, 1775, the Princesse de Lamballe kissed hands on her appointment to the office.

But this triumph was to react detrimentally on the princess. It is true that a few months later Marie-Antoinette accepted an invitation from the Princesse de Lamballe to stay at the Château de Sceaux, which the Duc de Penthièvre had just inherited. The two friends greatly enjoyed hunting at Fontainebleau or rowing on the river at Choisy; but none of these pleasures was owing to the *surintendante's* initiative. When a heavy task devolved on her, such as organising the queen's household, arranging pleasures and fêtes, successfully varying the amusements by a thousand novelties of greater piquancy and attraction, Marie-Thérèse de Lamballe did not exert herself any more than usual; she was lacking in the qualities essential for work of this kind. She had been the most charming of companions for Marie-Antoinette, so long as she had had only to profit by enjoyments in which the dauphine took the lead; but when it came to displaying energy and activity, initiative and creative imagination, the Princesse de Lamballe was less than useless in the rôle assigned to her. Inexperienced, accustomed to being directed, lacking in firmness of character and that intelligent perspicacity which knows how to criticise and decide, the princess was awkward, lazy and frightened when confronted by

a task which was beyond her capacity. Moreover, the ill-will of the jealous added to the difficulties of her office. The Princesse de Chimay and Madame de Mailly set the queen's household talking against the princess, so, alive to the hostility with which she was surrounded and the difficulties that she could not surmount, she contented herself by inviting the men and women who formed her set to meet the queen in her own home.

One of the most brilliant members of this set was the Comte d'Artois, who delighted in telling dirty stories. There were also to be seen the Duc and the Duchesse de Chartres, *née* de Bourbon-Penthièvre, own sister-in-law to Lamballe, Lauzun, Mesdames de Saluées and d'Ache, Messieurs de Lastie, du Authier, de Clermont-Gallerande, the Marquis de Conflans, Monsieur de Pons, de Barbentane, Madame de Genlis, Sillery, and sometimes also the old Duc d'Orléans. Among these people there were several wits, but Marie-Antoinette would for the most part have preferred to amuse herself rather than talk ; this, however, the *surintendante* did not appear to understand, and the sole pleasure which she offered the queen in her house was that of conversation.

While the Princesse de Lamballe persisted in her blunder of not entertaining the queen with more liveliness, another set, active, intelligent and ambitious, succeeded in attracting her majesty, and neglected nothing to provide her with plenty of amusements and constantly to vary her pleasures. This was the set of the de Polignacs and their friends, headed by the beautiful brunette, Madame Jules de Polignac, outwardly unassuming, but hiding under a frivolous exterior an insatiable nature, an unbounded ambition and a malevolent jealousy of the *surintendante*. She was determined, cost what it might, to supplant her in the queen's favour and liberality.

At the de Polignacs' the *surintendante* was attacked with a cunning and unwearying perfidy which gradually injured her in Marie-Antoinette's eyes. Had the princess only realised the game played by Madame de Polignac

and from the first employed the same weapons in the struggle, namely, amused the queen more than did the de Polignacs and tried to open her eyes to Madame Polignac's true character, their ardent friendship would have withstood the attacks from the hostile camp. But Madame de Lamballe adopted an attitude most fatal to her interests. Feeling that the queen's love for her had cooled, she became sad and sometimes appeared before her sovereign, whom she amused less and less, with a face bathed in tears.

One evening, on the occasion of a big ball at the Duc de Chartres', at the Palais Royal, at which Marie-Antoinette was to wear one of the loveliest and most becoming gowns which she had ever possessed, the princess was expecting the queen to dinner at the Hôtel de Toulouse in order to go on from there to the ball. Marie-Antoinette had accepted the *surintendante's* invitation because she hoped that the princess would contrive to assemble a company capable of appreciating her gown and of admiring her as she liked to be admired. This queen, one of whose strongest passions was to please, and who, although a very virtuous woman, liked to see men moved as she passed by, wondered on her way to the Hôtel de Toulouse who would be the guests chosen with a special eye to pleasing her. But Lamballe had invited the queen in order to have her to herself for several hours. The salons in which she received Marie-Antoinette were magnificent, but empty. So disappointed was the queen that at first she thought it was a joke which would presently change into a brilliant surprise. But the surprise failed to materialise ; Lamballe wept, realising the queen's displeasure, and Marie-Antoinette, with a frigid air, quickly left the friend whom she had just found so stupid.

The misunderstanding grew. Marie-Antoinette imagined that at the bottom of her heart she still remained faithful to the friendship which as dauphine she had vowed to Lamballe, but she no longer took any pleasure

in her society. When, in April 1779, the queen had an attack of measles and was obliged to keep to her bed, she did not send for the princess. The gayest young men at court—Besanval, Coigny, Esterhazy and several others, were summoned by the sovereign, who delighted in their *risqué* stories, but she had no wish to see Lamballe, from whom she feared reproaches and regrets.

This new attitude on the part of the queen was still further accentuated when Marie-Antoinette returned from Bourbon-les-Bains at the end of the summer of the same year. It was at Marly that she first met Lamballe after her return. Marie-Antoinette was so cold at this meeting that the princess, utterly disconsolate, determined to follow the others' example and endeavour to amuse the sovereign at any price.

So she allowed high play at her house, got together a number of guests and encouraged boisterous and doubtful amusements. But the queen lost large sums of money at the *surintendante's* and considered certain jokes and the attitude which the Duc de Chartres and some of his friends adopted towards herself coarse rather than amusing. Thus, these parties which had cost the princess so much effort and thought, aggravated her relations with the queen instead of improving them. Marie-Antoinette blamed Lamballe for the losses she had sustained at her house and the annoyances she had experienced there. Her resentment showed itself openly when, in August or September, 1780, the Princesse de Lamballe was not admitted to the performances at Trianon, composed chiefly of Beaumarchais' comedies played by the queen and the de Polignac set.

Madame de Lamballe was so upset at the attitude taken up by the queen that her nervous malady which had returned slightly ever since Marie-Antoinette's first coldness in 1778, increased to an alarming extent after the humiliation of 1780. The princess became so ill that it was impossible for her to continue to live at court and she had to instal herself in the Hôtel d'Eu at Versailles.

Her enemies profited by her condition to spread the falsest reports about her. The camp of the de Polignacs tried to persuade the queen that the illness from which the princess was suffering was not what was stated, but epilepsy. They pointed out that it was really very dangerous for her to continue to have for a friend a person in this state of health, whose fits, which they described as "appalling", might have the most serious effect on her.

In a word, they employed in common with others who, like themselves, were jealous of the *surintendante*, of her position and of the favours which she had enjoyed, all the arguments likely to frighten the sovereign and to separate her from her former friend.

Marie-Antoinette made a feeble resistance, but the de Polignacs succeeded in alarming her about the "epileptic fits" which Lamballe might, they averred, have in front of her. So the estrangement between the two former friends became more and more marked. The princess retained her post at court, but the queen avoided all occasions of seeing, or even meeting her casually. Soon, the two women only spoke to each other at rare intervals, and the princess's malady became more and more pronounced. Never a day passed without her crying for several hours on end. Her thinness became painful to see, and she was thoroughly depressed. Her father-in-law, who was devotedly fond of her, thought of every possible means to cure her, but all the doctors seemed helpless and their remedies ineffectual.

At last, in 1785, the Duc de Penthièvre consulted the celebrated Saxon doctor, Saiffert, who had settled in France and whose wonderful cures were the admiration of all Paris. Saiffert examined the sick woman closely, kept her for several weeks under observation, and after giving the deepest thought to her case, announced to the duke that he could effect a complete cure.

These tidings produced something in the nature of an electric shock at court. Hardly had three days elapsed

after Dr. Saiffert's assertion that he could cure the young woman when he was approached by an unknown messenger who offered him a considerable sum of money to say that Lamballe was an epileptic.

Far from paying any heed to such an offer, Saiffert at once insisted that the princess should go down to the country with her father-in-law, and the treatment began in the month of June, 1786. Numerous anonymous letters containing threats of death or the most horrible fate, poured in on Dr. Saiffert directly he began to attend the Duc de Penthièvre's daughter-in-law.

Attempts were even made to poison him. One day, a well-known marquise called in Dr. Saiffert's services. He hastened to her house, listened patiently to the account of her pretended ills, which seemed to him entirely imaginary, gave her advice relating to her general health only, and was about to leave when the lady insisted that he should first accept a glass of beer. The doctor allowed the beer to be poured out, but a movement on the part of the servant performing this office struck him as singular, and since he had found the marquise's behaviour and description of her symptoms strange too, he asked her, before wetting his lips with the beer, to have the kindness to change glasses with him. The lady, in a panic, confessed that he had guessed everything, that she herself had no personal interest in this intrigue, but had merely yielded to the pressure of friends to whom she was under obligations.

On another occasion it was the Princesse de Lamballe whom they attempted to poison. She was very fond of truffles and mushrooms. Sometimes her relations in Savoy would send her some. Now, one day a basket containing truffles and mushrooms arrived for her without any previous notice. The Duc de Penthièvre, justly suspicious, forbade the contents of the basket to be used until they had first been tried on the cats and dogs. The meat which these animals ate most greedily was prepared with the greatest care, and mixed therein were some of

the truffles and mushrooms sent. Neither the cats nor the dogs would touch the meat, although ordinarily they loved their food, and even ate mushrooms and truffles by themselves if they were cooked in oil. The relations at Savoy, on being questioned, replied that they had never despatched a parcel at that time.

These criminal attempts on the princess's life notwithstanding, Dr. Saiffert's treatment completely realised the hopes which the specialist's promises had led her friends to expect. She became strong and fresh once more and her attacks occurred at much longer intervals. When the queen's name was mentioned and the princess observed how long it was since she had seen her, her melancholia again got the upper hand and she lost her appetite. But Dr. Saiffert had rightly made it a special point in the treatment that the princess's mind should be distracted as much as possible from all thought of the queen. Marie-Thérèse de Lamballe had much too delicate and sensitive a nature to be able to bear intense emotions, either too often repeated or too prolonged. In 1787 she was sufficiently recovered to go in the summer for a course of salt-water baths to Brighton, accompanied by her servants only. On her return, the Princesse de Lamballe, now cured, resumed her normal life.

Thus it came about that she was at Paris when the people, full of the difficulties that the court had put in the way of allowing the States-General to continue their meetings, and incited by demagogues and republicans, rushed to the Bastille on the morning of the 14th of July, 1789, and took possession of this fortress of which not one stone was to be left standing on another. The Princesse de Lamballe's fear on this the first day of the Revolution was so great and so alarming that the Duc de Penthièvre insisted upon his daughter-in-law's returning at once to stay with him at the Château d'Eu in Normandy.

Here it was that the queen's messenger found Marie-Thérèse de Lamballe on the 7th of October, 1789, when

he arrived at the château at nine o'clock in the evening to inform her that the sovereign was awaiting her, in a state of perplexity, at the Tuileries.

Not for a single second did Marie-Thérèse hesitate. A hurricane was blowing. The country, plunged in the darkness of a night of wind and storm, was full of bands of malcontents who deemed the time had arrived to be revenged on the nobility for enjoying greater riches than themselves. Less than three months ago the terror which the young woman had felt on the day of the storming of the Bastille had almost caused a recrudescence of her malady. She knew that to-day it was another revolutionary movement which had compelled the royal family to leave Versailles to settle in Paris. All this was of no moment in her eyes when the queen called her. She no longer remembered that this queen had been indifferent for a time, that she had listened to mischievous tales, that she had even shared the ill-natured suspicions with which people had tried to crush her. All this devoted friend of the queen thought of now was that Marie-Antoinette and herself were bound together by the strongest and sincerest ties of affection, and that her unhappy sovereign had need of her. She was grateful that she had wanted her presence in the hour of danger and had sent her word. Her enemies had deserted their posts; they had already fled the country. Lamballe was very happy to come into her own again. She had now no cause to fear that her enemies would stand between the queen and herself.

The princess's one thought was to start as quickly as possible in order the sooner to reach the queen's side. This delicate woman, whose emotions were ordinarily so dangerous on account of their intensity and depth, mastered her instinctive terror in order to be henceforth the queen's enthusiastic and devoted friend. Against the duke's advice she courageously entered her carriage at midnight and left for Paris accompanied only by one of her father-in-law's gentlemen and a maid.

The next day, the Princesse de Lamballe was at the Tuileries. Her joy at meeting the queen again was immense; but with what passion did she not pity her for being obliged to live in this palace with doors which would not shut properly, without mirrors, short of beds, its parquet floors in bad condition, the walls damp and an atmosphere of sadness pervading the whole! So, since in spite of the heroism of which she had just given proof by her attachment to her sovereign, she was still at bottom the woman with an eternally young nature, to whom the happiness of the moment was all-sufficing and who refused to spoil this happiness by fears as to what might follow, she endeavoured to amuse Marie-Antoinette in 1789 as they had both amused themselves in 1774. She was, moreover, convinced that everything would settle down quietly again and that the French monarchy would remain the same as it had been since the days of Richelieu. That was why she induced the queen to dance a great deal, why she ran up charming gowns for her with the aid of the Marquise de Lage, her maid of honour, to whom she repeatedly said, when the latter expressed fears over the revolutionary attitude of the people: "Paris is not so terrible as they imagine in your Saintonge."

At the beginning of 1791, the Princesse de Lamballe went to England to try and arouse active sympathy on behalf of Marie-Antoinette and all the royal family. She failed in her object; but we know that the queen was very grateful to her and followed her in thought day by day. In February of 1924 there were even sold in London letters from Marie-Antoinette to the Princesse de Lamballe which, it was believed, related to this particular period of their lives.

In one of them, Marie-Antoinette, grieved over the absence of the woman who had again become the dear friend that she was at the time of Louis XV's death, wrote:

"My darling Lamballe,—
You cannot imagine what my state of mind has been since you went."

And the queen was in no wise exaggerating when she wrote thus. The princess was the only lady left of the happy court of old, who was now at the Tuileries by Marie-Antoinette's side. The queen could neither be blind to the fact nor help feeling a strong affection for Lamballe on this account.

But in the afternoon of the 20th of June, 1791, the princess waited in vain for Léonard, the queen's hairdresser, who had also become hers since her return to court. Léonard was to have dressed the princess's hair that afternoon because she was going to a big ball in the evening. When her hairdresser failed to arrive, Madame de Lamballe was much amused and remarked to several persons that Léonard had been "carried off".

She little thought how near she was to the truth; in reality, the queen, fleeing with the various members of the royal family and a few faithful followers, had taken Léonard without saying anything to the princess, for the king and those who had arranged the flight had made her promise not to speak of the scheme to anyone.

Not until later in the evening did the Princesse de Lamballe learn of the flight. On hearing the tidings, she thought that the best thing she could do was to copy the sovereign's example, and, on the 21st of June at six o'clock in the morning, she left Paris with six other persons, one of whom was the postmaster of Saint-Denis, who was of the greatest assistance to her. They made for Normandy where lived the Duc de Penthièvre and arrived at Aumale, a town in which the duke was staying at the time with the *bailli*, at half-past six in the evening.

The princess bade farewell to her father-in-law, who promised to send her in exile everything which she would need and could not take with her that day. She then continued her journey to a foreign land, avoiding Amiens,

but passing through Abbeville and sleeping at Boulogne. The next day she embarked for Dover. It was in this town that she learned that the royal family had been arrested at Varennes.

This mournful news inspired the princess with a keen desire to cross quickly to Belgium in order to try and see Count Axel de Fersen and learn from his lips in what way she could serve the queen. On the 26th of June the princess landed at Ostend, and on the 6th of July she met Fersen at Brussels.

But what could Fersen himself advise at that particular time? In despair over the failure of the queen's flight, which he thought he had arranged so well, miserably unhappy over the knowledge that she was to all intents and purposes a prisoner at the Tuileries, convinced that the Revolution could not be checked, he merely gave the Princesse de Lamballe the necessary directions for communicating with her and the assurance of his passionate and whole-hearted devotion to the queen. Then the princess continued her journey to Aix-la-Chapelle, where she arrived on the 11th of July finding in that town the money and wearing apparel which the Duc de Penthièvre had already forwarded to her. So Marie-Thérèse de Lamballe was now in safety and in possession of the necessaries of life. But she did not feel easy in her mind.

Her conscience pricked her for having abandoned the queen. Her father-in-law also intimated that she was both in duty and honour bound to be at the queen's side. To be sure, quite near to Aix-la-Chapelle, at Coblentz, there was the whole set of her former enemies at court, the party of the "red heels" (*talons rouges*) as they were called, composed of the de Polignacs, the de Polastrons and their friends, not one of whom had the slightest inclination to go to Paris to the rescue of the king, the queen and their children. But was it people such as these that Marie-Thérèse should copy? Even though at Paris she might be able to do nothing for the queen,

would not Marie-Antoinette be glad to see and talk to her ?

Such were the reflections of the princess whose instinct of self-preservation caused her to hesitate for a moment, when on the 14th of October she received an urgent letter from Marie-Antoinette. The queen believed that the Revolution had come to an end because the Constituent Assembly had closed, and on the advice of the devoted Barnave Louis XVI had accepted the Constitution.

The princess no longer shared the queen's illusions. She had understood Fersen's words too well and heard too much of the French *émigrés'* conversation not to know that everything was to be feared from the revolutionary movement, which had never ceased to gather strength since its birth two years previously. But, as on the 7th of October, 1789, Lamballe was ready to sacrifice all for the sake of the friend whom she loved so ardently, for the queen, whom she revered and who fascinated her as much as ever. Convinced that she would lose her liberty by returning to France, Lamballe made her will at Aix-la-Chapelle, and on the 29th of October, she again took the road to Paris. She arrived there on the 4th of November and immediately resumed her life at the Tuileries.

Lamballe's return was a real joy to Marie-Antoinette. The two women recovered their former faith in each other, their perfect and sincere friendship, their need of mutual devotion. The sojourn at the Tuileries, which the royal family found so irksome, was rendered less hard, thanks to the princess's friendship. But this was all that the former *surintendante's* sacrifice could achieve. Threats succeeded threats, days of murder followed those of insurrection down to the time when the royal family foundered on that awful day of the 10th of August, 1792.

On that day the Princesse de Lamballe's courage reached its high-water mark. Valiant and unfaltering, in spite of the shrieks of the mob, the noise of the tocsin, and the

MARIE-THÉRÈSE LOUISE DE SAVOY CARIGNAN,
MADAME DE LAMBALLE

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blood of victims, she followed the queen, with head held high, first to the Assembly, then to the Feuillants, and lastly to the Temple prison on the 13th of August, 1792. The sight of the queen's sufferings acted as a spur to further heroism.

But her sojourn in the Temple by the side of the queen whom she loved so dearly, was to be of short duration. She was removed, together with Mesdames de Tourzel, on the night of the 19th–20th of August and transferred to the prison of La Force where she occupied the same room as the former governess of the royal children and her daughter.

Far from queen Marie-Antoinette, the Princesse de Lamballe lost her heroism. Pale, frightened, trembling at every sound in the street, she had almost the air of a sick child by the side of the de Tourzel ladies, who, faithful to the promise which they had given to the queen, looked after her with tender affection. Outside, the Duc de Penthièvre and Dr. Saiffert made strenuous efforts to save her, but it was impossible even to gain access to the unhappy woman in order to cheer her.

On the morning of the 3rd of September, Lamballe, with her morbidly sensitive nature, had a presentiment of the crime about to be perpetrated. The ladies de Tourzel noticed that she was paler than usual, her tremulous gaze, her body quivering like that of an animal chased by the hunter. When she was sent for to appear before the so-called prison tribunal, she had almost to be carried; whiter than her white gown, she was a pitiful sight. But it was much worse when one of the two commissaries before whom she appeared announced that she was free. These words were the signal to the butchers in the street that a new victim was arriving. It was then that Lamballe had a clear premonition of her murder. Her eyes were transfixed with terror. She tried to resist the pressure which propelled her towards the door and to escape from the butchers whom she knew to be awaiting her. But the

pressure in the direction of the door was irresistible and hardly had the unhappy woman crossed its threshold than she was struck down by a formidable blow.

Her corpse was subjected to the most vile defilement. On this poor body the rabble wreaked its hatred of all that the queen had held dear. At the same time her memory was smirched by the grossest insult, for round her remains the crowd repeated " Behold the Sappho of Trianon ". And since crime begets crime and those murderers were intoxicated with blood and cruelties, one of them severed the unfortunate princess's head from the trunk and placed it on the top of a pike. This gory trophy was handed to a kind of giant, a butcher by trade, in whose train followed a low and sordid procession which was determined to force the queen to look on Lamballe's convulsed face and which marched to the Temple chanting : " The Austrian must embrace Sappho for the last time."

So perished, a victim of the most infamous of crimes, one of the sweetest and most refined women that France has ever known. Intended for a simple, pure and domestic life, the Princesse de Lamballe, as the result of an unhappy marriage, was initiated, at the age of seventeen, into the most degrading vices of French society at the end of the eighteenth century.

Later, her devoted friendship for the queen caused all kinds of black intrigues to be woven about her, and her death was, by reason of the horrible circumstances in which it occurred, the most tragic of any in the whole of the Revolution.

CHARLOTTE CORDAY D'ARMONT

About 1760 there lived, not far from Saint-Saturnin, in that part of Normandy which the Constituent Assembly was later to make the department of Calvados, a family, directly descended from the great Corneille's sister. The name of this family was Corday d'Armont. The demesne on which the Corday d'Armonts lived had been originally christened "La Ronceraye" ("The Briars") by the neighbours, so overrun was it by bramble bushes and so badly kept were its grounds. Monsieur Corday d'Armont, far from protesting against the name given to his property, adopted it, and "La Ronceraye" became henceforward the name by which it was known. The property continued to be as neglected and badly farmed as it was at the time when it earned the soubriquet of "La Ronceraye," because Monsieur d'Armont evinced but a half-hearted interest in his estates. He was much more taken up with criticising the right of primogeniture which had robbed him to the advantage of his eldest brother, and with showing his dissatisfaction with what the king did or omitted to do, to try and improve the cultivation of his lands. The consequence of this neglect was that the property brought in much less than it should have done and the Corday d'Armonts became financially embarrassed. In spite of this, the family increased, and, after the birth of other children, the heroine of this chapter, Charlotte Corday d'Armont, was born at "La Ronceraye" on the 28th of July, 1768.

Her first years passed uneventfully, but her intelligence and strong will early struck those around her. They also observed how serious and quiet she would become

when Monsieur d'Armont criticised the king and his measures, and how this quite small child thought more often than she played.

At the age of thirteen Charlotte lost her mother, and it was she whom her father then chose to manage the house. Notwithstanding her youth, Charlotte was an excellent housekeeper. But she had only filled the post for a few months, when the abbess of the abbey of Nôtre Dame de Caen, a family friend, asked Monsieur Corday d'Armont to give her the care of his daughter Charlotte in order that she might share the lessons, games and life of her own niece, whom she wished to bring up but whom she feared might be lonely in the convent.

Monsieur d'Armont accepted the abbess's proposal with alacrity, and Charlotte departed for Caen. The little girl delighted in the quiet life of study and meditation which she lived in the convent. What she especially liked was the huge and splendid library. Monks and nuns were different from those of bygone centuries. They walked abreast of the times and the latest works of the philosophers and encyclopædists adorned the shelves of their library. It was works such as these and historical books which attracted Charlotte. She read them with avidity, and as she turned the pages they awakened an echo from her childhood's days. She met again those lively and bitter criticisms that she had so often heard her father direct against the king's government, but they were much more violent, more acid, more numerous in the works of the philosophers, economists and encyclopædists of the eighteenth century. These writers appeared to her to be passionately sincere and to be animated by the desire to save France from irreparable ruin. After reading them, Charlotte became inflamed with a passion for France. She, too, desired its welfare and happiness as ardently as they. She even wondered how she herself could help to obtain this happiness. She worked herself up into a state of excitement as she read the attacks against prejudices and injustices,

and as her patriotism grew and her enthusiasm for the proposed reforms deepened, she was indignant that the most enlightened classes in France did not themselves initiate these philanthropic and political measures which were so urgently needed.

It has been said that Charlotte Corday detested the aristocrats, and that her hatred drove her so far as to take a delight in dipping her handkerchief in their blood, so that she might smell it and adorn herself with it. These are merely calumnies and legends. Charlotte Corday, herself a member of the aristocracy by birth, so far from hating the aristocrats, fervently wished that they would put themselves at the head of the reform movement. But if this selfish, frivolous and decadent aristocracy refused to give up any of its unjust privileges, if it turned a deaf ear to the sufferings of France, Charlotte had no wish that her country should be sacrificed to it and preferred the death of the aristocracy rather than the death of France.

Those were Charlotte Corday's sentiments when the day of the 14th of July, 1789, had its repercussion in Caen. It was on the 12th of August, 1789. On that particular day, bands of people, intoxicated with rage and spite, choosing to see in the monasteries and convents rivals of the Bastille, invaded the abbey of the Dame de Caen and before the eyes of the two young girls, some of the nuns, and the abbess, massacred the abbess's nephew, Monsieur de Belzunce, who, noting the temper of the crowd, had hastened to the abbey in order to protect his aunt and those under her care.

Charlotte Corday was greatly affected by the murder of Monsieur de Belzunce, not, as many writers declare, because she was in love with him. Love for a man played no part in the affair. Charlotte was agitated because the events of this day, the 12th of August, had kindled and inflamed her patriotism. All her tender feelings for France which up till then had lain dormant in her heart sprang into life and cried aloud for open

expression. Her mind, following the dictates of her heart, told her that the time had come for the regeneration of France, that she must no longer hesitate or delay, that the hour for action had struck and that the ignorant and violent must not be allowed to take the lead as they had done at Caen, and so compromise the work of reform and the well-being of the country.

After the events of the 12th of August, Charlotte could no longer remain on at the monastery, so she returned home to her father. But life with him seemed intolerable. While Charlotte's mind had widened and adapted itself to modern views under the influence of her reading and the events of the day, Monsieur Corday d'Armont, on the other hand, who formerly had passed such severe strictures on royalty, now reacted in the opposite direction, and from being a *frondeur* he had become an intolerant Royalist. Between Monsieur and Mademoiselle Corday d'Armont there existed so profound an incompatibility of opinions, sentiments and desires that the young girl, after trying for several months to get on with her father, soon determined to return to live at Caen at the house of an old relative, Madame de Bretteville.

Charlotte's arrival at Madame de Bretteville's was far from being an unmixed pleasure for the old lady. After many years passed by the side of a selfish, despotic and autocratic husband, the widow had just begun to enjoy her independence when the girl announced her intention of coming to live with her. Madame de Bretteville left no stone unturned to divert Charlotte from her purpose. It was in vain. The girl wanted to hear discussions about the future, to nourish her faith in France by listening to the recital of her sorrows and needs, to find out in what way she herself could serve her country. It was, therefore, essential that she should leave her father who had so small an understanding of what she felt so strongly, and that she should be free to devote herself to this patriotic work.

After her return to Caen, Charlotte sought to take up her reading again, to keep herself in touch with public opinion by reading the papers and following the reports of political meetings. Always eager and thrilled when France was the subject in question, she arrived gradually at the conclusion that she must play a personal part in the regeneration of her beloved country, and worried herself to death in trying to discover what this part might be.

While Charlotte was preoccupied in Normandy with the idea of making a sacrifice for France, in Paris the march of events became more and more tragic. After the fall of the royal family (the 10th of August, 1792) the Convention had tried, sentenced to death and executed King Louis XVI (January 1793).[1] This bold and dramatic act gave rise almost at once to dissensions in the Assembly, for the violent party, the Montagnards, being fully aware that the moderates, the Girondists, had only voted for the king's death under the sway of fear, now summoned up courage to get rid of them. It was now war to the knife between the Mountain and the Gironde. The Mountain won the day, and the Girondists, rounded up, and threatened with imprisonment and death, left Paris in large numbers on the 31st of May and the 2nd of June to seek refuge in the provinces. The Gironde endeavoured to make its base in those departments which were inimical to Paris, in which city the Mountain had its stronghold. Eighteen of these persecuted Girondists went to Caen, where the population showed them great sympathy. Among the Girondists who found their way to Caen were Buzot, Guadet, Languinais, Barbaroux, and Pétion, to name only the best known.

No sooner had they arrived at Caen than these men, who had come for the purpose of gaining partisans, set to work to organise meetings at the house of the intendant, and, by eloquent and pathetic speeches, endeavoured

[1] See the chapter on "Marie-Antoinette".

to convert their audiences to their views and sentiments. The most enthusiastic and the most regular of their hearers was Charlotte Corday. While listening to these eloquent men, whose southern nature knew so well how to enliven their arguments and place them in a fair light, whose glowing words set on fire the minds and hearts of their listeners, whose impassioned and persuasive gestures carried their audience along with them, Charlotte had no longer any doubt that it was they who could and would save France.

It has been said that thereupon she became a Girondist. She never became a Girondist, never indeed bothered about the names and characteristics of the various parties, but she believed that, at last, she had met the men who had the enthusiasm and will-power, intelligence, honesty and disinterestedness essential for the salvation and regeneration of France. Neither was it, as has been likewise stated, because Charlotte Corday was in love with one of the Girondists, Barbaroux, that she hoped so much from the men of the group to which he belonged. It was simply because their eloquence convinced her that their schemes were well founded and their qualities great. She admired and liked them as patriots, and was ready to serve them because she was at one with them in their love of France.

This love was so inherent in Charlotte's nature that the indifference of a Frenchman to his country's fate, no matter who he might be, was intolerable to her and absolutely incomprehensible. One day when on her way to a political meeting at the intendant's, she perceived two men playing cards on a doorstep. She was so astonished and indignant at the sight that, stopping in front of the card-players, she exclaimed, in tones fraught with anger, surprise and sorrow, " What ! playing cards ! and your country perishing ! " Charlotte herself would have done anything rather than let her country perish.

Such was the state of the young girl's mind, her admiration for the Girondists whom she knew, her faith in

their mission, her exalted love for her country, when she read in Marat's journal, *L'Ami du peuple*, several articles in which that bloodthirsty Montagnard demanded with convulsive hatred the executions *en masse* of the Girondist deputies.

As she read these articles Charlotte was seized with the idea that here, at last, she had found the best means of serving France. She would go and kill this monster who demanded the death of the people who alone could save the country.

This act would cost her her life, but what did that matter if her sacrifice enabled the Girondists to accomplish their work and France to recover happiness and prosperity!

The girl who thought and felt after this wise was not yet twenty-five. She was beautiful and bewitching, but her beauty was not of that arch type which cajoles and fails to hold the onlooker. Charlotte's beauty had a strength and nobility which reflected her mind and soul. Her broad forehead told of intelligence; in her large and exceedingly lovely grey eyes could be read the loftiness of her thoughts and her complete disinterestedness; her chin, which was firm, betokened a strong will; her complexion of milk and roses was dazzling and proclaimed her triumphant youth and robust health. Her nose was a perfect aquiline. She had a wealth of magnificent ash-blond hair, a tall figure and distinguished bearing at once beautiful and dominating, attractive and imposing.

Content to sacrifice all these attractions on the altar of France, Charlotte confided her project to no one. Indeed, she continued for several days to live exactly the same kind of life that she had done before forming her resolution, going to the intendant's with the same regularity as heretofore, listening to her friends with the same fervour, without any alteration in her manner or general attitude. So little was her scheme suspected that one day at the intendant's, when she was talking to Barbaroux, Pétion, who knew that she belonged to the

aristocracy by birth and who, at their very first meeting, had been struck by her noble bearing, said in her hearing : " See, there goes the beautiful aristocrat who has returned to have a look at the republicans." But Charlotte regarded the title of " aristocrat " as an insult since she had lost all hope that the aristocracy would hazard any sort of heroic act in order to save France. So, hurt, she turned to Pétion and in a serious and rather solemn voice replied :

" You are judging me to-day without knowing me, but one day you will know me as I really am."

As she spoke she was thinking of her scheme, and already she was making up her mind to prepare for her departure. Since she was going to work for France, Charlotte wished that everything about her should be worthy of the high mission which she had made her own. That is why, first of all, she ordered two gowns in the latest fashion : one for travelling and street wear, the other for evening. The travelling dress chosen by Charlotte was brown and with it went a high black felt hat trimmed with wide strings of the same colour, according to the fashion of the period. The second frock was a pretty dishabille of spotted Indian muslin, with a fan and a pair of elegant shoes to go with it. When these preparations were complete, Charlotte spoke to Barbaroux about one of her women friends, Mademoiselle Forbin, who had emigrated and for whom she desired to obtain a favour. She asked him for this purpose to recommend her to some friend of his in Paris, where, she said, it was her intention to proceed shortly. Barbaroux gave her a letter to the deputy, Duperret, who, he assured her, would take up Mademoiselle Forbin's case as she desired. Charlotte had then only to pack the few things which she wanted to take with her to Paris, and to say good-bye to her father.

At this time Monsieur Corday d'Armont was no longer living at " La Ronceraye " but at Argentan. Charlotte explained that she had come to spend a couple of days

with him because, on account of the troublous condition of France, she had thought it wise to accept the post of governess which had been offered to her in an English family; but that she felt she could not go without first bidding farewell to her father and having a few hours' talk with him. Charlotte could not bear telling a lie, but were she to speak the truth, she knew well that she would not be able to kill Marat. The girl was so serene and smiling, her whole demeanour so tranquil and bright, that Monsieur Corday d'Armont had not the faintest suspicion that his daughter's story was not entirely true.

From Argentan Charlotte took the coach to Paris. During the two days' journey, her serenity so charmed one of her travelling companions that before they reached the capital he asked her to marry him. Charlotte smiled but did not divulge her name.

When at last they arrived at Paris, on the 11th of July, 1793, about mid-day, she experienced a thrill of joy because she was near the monster and the accomplishment of her sacrifice. She put up at an hotel in the rue des Vieux Augustins, where she occupied room No. 13, according to some writers, No. 17 according to others. This detail, in any case, is of no importance and in no way worried the young woman.

What she wanted to find out was where Marat lived, and at what time he went to the Assembly, where she intended to strike him down in the midst of his friends. But Marat no longer went to the Convention. A sick man, it was from his house and, above all, through the columns of his journal that he continued to excite the sanguinary spirit of the Montagnards, and to drive the Revolution ever farther along the path of terror.

These tidings were a cruel disappointment to Charlotte Corday. However, after a night's rest, she decided to take a day off for the execution of affairs of minor importance and not to give a single thought to her great mission. She paid a call on the deputy, Duperret,

delivered the letter which Barbaroux had given her and pleaded the cause of her friend with success.

Not one of those who on that day, the 12th of July, 1793, saw this beautiful quiet girl, interested in the life going on all round her, dazzling in her youth and health, whose intelligent eyes revealed the purity of her nature, would have supposed that she was ready to die and that so great was her love for France that without any feeling of regret she was prepared to sacrifice her life for its sake.

On the 13th of July, Charlotte rose early, her cheeks rosy from a good night's rest, and repaired to the *Galeries* of the Palais Egalité to buy the knife which was to avenge the death of the patriots whom she admired. But when she arrived there, the shops were not yet open. So she filled in the interval by playing with the children who were romping in the garden before going to school. She played with them until she could purchase the knife for which she had come. It was a large kitchen knife, which she concealed in the folds of her fichu and for which she paid the sum of two francs. Then she searched for a cab whose driver might know Marat's address. The first she accosted could not tell her. She called another, and from him she learned that Marat lived at No. 30 in the rue des Cordeliers (the house he occupied is to-day No. 20 in the rue de l'Ecole de Médecine). Charlotte was driven to Marat's house, where she tried to gain admittance.

But however hateful and blood-stained might be the founder of *L'Ami du peuple*, a woman, one Simone Evrard, had attached herself to him with a passion as intense as it was disinterested. A former workshop hand, Simone had put all her savings at Marat's disposal in order to keep going and to disseminate the journal by means of which the terrible Montagnard furnished the guillotine with victims.

Marat had taken Simone as wife before the country's altar, and Simone for the better defence and protection of the man whom she adored summoned her sister Catherine to live with her so that the latter might help

her in her labour of love. This sister soon married one of the printers of *L'Ami du peuple*, and from that time onwards the two women watched over Marat with a solicitude and affection more alert and vigilant than ever was bestowed by miser on his gold. With the intuition born of love, Simone sensed in the visitors who called on Marat those who were his friends and those who were enemies, and when, on the morning of the 13th of July, Charlotte Corday appeared at No. 30 in the rue des Cordeliers, Marat's enamoured wife experienced immediately a feeling of extreme uneasiness. The young woman was met with a rough and obstinate refusal when she asked to see Marat.

But Charlotte was quite as unshakable in her determination as Simone. Hardly was she back again in the rue des Vieux Augustins than she wrote to Marat asking for an interview at which, she said, she would tell him all that was going on at Caen and in Normandy generally. At the same time she decided to return to the terrorist's house about mid-day. It was not to gain admittance that she went this time, but to take stock of the lie of the land. This explains why Charlotte's second visit to the rue des Cordeliers was rapid and without any apparent result. Some writers have asserted that the young woman lost heart at this particular moment and that she turned her back so hastily on No. 30 because she lacked the courage to proceed and carry out her resolution.

To speak in this way of Charlotte Corday is to know her imperfectly and to misunderstand her completely, for next to her passionate love for her country, the two qualities which stand out in her character and never fail, are her courage and her strength of will.

Moreover, that same evening, at a quarter-past seven, the young Republican returned to Marat's house, wearing on this occasion her prettiest gown—her spotted Indian muslin dress, elegantly shod and carrying in her hand her lovely fan. Again she encountered a barrier at the door in Simone's refusal to admit her. But she insisted,

raising her voice, and Marat, from his bath, which was in the room adjoining the dining-room, in its turn adjacent to the hall-door, heard Charlotte and gave the order to admit her. Simone obeyed, as she always obeyed Marat, and the young woman found herself in the presence of the " monster " whom she had come to kill. Marat in his bath was hideous to look upon. His body was covered with an eruption, his eyes bloodshot, his head wrapped about with a frightful red cotton handkerchief, his mouth twisted with pain and with a feline smile as he scented his prey, his legs drawn up to his chest on account of the shortness of his uncomfortable bath-tub, athwart which lay a writing board stained with ink on which he was accustomed to write his articles for *L'Ami du peuple.* With his forehead enveloped in water compresses strongly sprinkled with vinegar, the man who fed the guillotine seemed a fearful and dangerous animal rather than a human being. For weeks past Marat had spent the greater part of the day in his bath trying to assuage the intolerable burning itch inflicted by his skin disease.

Charlotte paid no attention to these revolting details. She only saw that the cruel countenance of the man who sowed hate and who had demanded the heads of those whom she knew to be good and great patriots, bore the expression which she had expected, and it was in face of this last proof of the justification for her resolution, that she hastened to close behind her the door of the narrow closet where Marat was taking his bath.

Marat, from his bath-tub, smiled his painful smile at the entrance of the new-comer and asked her for detailed information concerning the Girondist refugees at Caen. According to Charlotte's own depositions, it was after the terrorist had written down all the names of the deputies and administrators who were organising the federal movement at Caen, exclaiming the while with fierce delight : " They shall all be guillotined ", that the young girl struck the tyrant with the knife which she had bought at the Palais Egalité, and which she had

hidden in the folds of her evening fichu as she had hidden it in that which she wore by day.

The blow that Charlotte struck at Marat's heart, piercing both heart and lung at the same time, was one of extraordinary force, dealt straight and without the slightest hesitation by the sure hand that was guided by a valiant soul and a conscience fully mistress of itself. Marat had only time to groan "Help ! dear friend", when he expired.

The uproar and confusion of the first moments were indescribable. Simone Evrard, half demented with grief, flung herself on Marat's body without any thought of lifting him out of the bath. Her sister Catherine next arrived, accompanied by members of the printing staff, but even then it never occurred to anyone. It was not until a good half-hour after his death that Catherine at last warned the authorities and looked about her. Then, for the first time, Charlotte Corday, who could very easily have made her escape long since had she been so minded, attracted attention. But, her act accomplished, she remained to claim full responsibility. From the moment that her project had first dawned on her she had been firmly and resolutely prepared to pay for her action with her life. That is why, far from attempting to fly, she stood motionless in a corner of the narrow closet waiting until she should receive attention.

Not until after nine o'clock in the evening did a kind of judicial commission, which included Chabot, arrive at the rue des Cordeliers to interrogate Charlotte. At once the authorities chose to see in the assassination of Marat a big Girondist plot. They affected to believe that the young woman who had dealt the fatal blow was no more than an enthusiastic tool skilfully manipulated and directed by the Girondist refugees at Caen, who had taken advantage of the passion with which Barbaroux had inspired the girl to make her carry out the plot.

However false and erroneous such a theory might be, and however ignorant might be the Girondists,

Barbaroux as well as the rest, of Charlotte Corday's schemes, this conception of the crime formed the basis of her first examination and dominated the whole case. At once they chose to think she had accomplices in Paris as well as in all the towns in which the Girondist refugees had sought shelter, and her interrogators sought eagerly to make her confess their names. But Charlotte, strong in the truth, continued to reply, calmly and composedly, that she had no accomplices. This young girl, whose heart had never beaten with passion except for her country, whose ardour had never been lavished upon any human love, was happy and proud to be able to asseverate conscientiously and with unshaken firmness that what she had done for the welfare of France she had indeed done alone, unprompted and unaided. She had come straight from Caen, she repeated, and was rejoiced that nothing had prevented or retarded her arrival in Paris.

At Marat's house Charlotte Corday's pockets were emptied and the watch which she was wearing was taken from her. It has been declared that at sight of this watch, which was a particularly pretty family trinket, artistically set in precious stones, Chabot stretched out his hand to take it. Observing his gesture, Charlotte, who had once read in the Caen papers that Chabot had been a monk in 1792, and who had recognised the renegade monk from his published portraits, is reported to have said with a spice of malice : " Have you forgotten, Chabot, that the Capuchins are vowed to poverty ? "

It is quite likely that Charlotte Corday never made such a remark, for the greater number of historical speeches were not invented until long after the date assigned to them. But if Charlotte did not address Chabot thus, it remains, nevertheless, true, that such a speech would have been entirely in harmony with her mental attitude while undergoing her first examination, so calm, collected and happy was she at having accomplished what she believed to be her duty, although her

pure and refined nature must certainly have felt repugnance from an act of such violence.

The articles which were taken from Charlotte's person at No. 30 rue des Cordeliers, comprised, besides her watch, twenty-five crown pieces (French), a hundred and forty francs in paper money, a key, her passport and a thimble. This thimble, so feminine and familiar, has something touching about it in circumstances such as these, and is the simplest and most persuasive witness that in the young Norman the woman was not submerged in the patriot.

At the end of this first interrogation of Charlotte Corday, arrangements were made for conducting the prisoner to the abbey. It was hardly quarter-past ten at night when she was made to descend the stairs leading from the first floor, on which Marat's apartment was situated, to the entrance door where a carriage was waiting to convey her to the abbey. By this time the rue des Cordeliers was like a raging sea. The news of Marat's assassination had spread through Paris with the rapidity of lightning, and the man who that same morning had been an object of terror to so many people was now regretted with every manifestation of violent and noisy grief. The crowd massed before the victim's house and clamoured loudly for the life of the culprit. With great difficulty Charlotte was got into the carriage which awaited her, for the mob howled that it would itself avenge the " Father of the People " of whom this criminal had just robbed it. When, at last, Charlotte was seated in the carriage the yells redoubled in intensity. Some of the people even succeeded in climbing on to the steps of the vehicle, lowering the windows and reaching the girl. They tore her clothes, pulled down her hair and tried to stab her.

In face of the fury of the mob, Charlotte experienced a profound sensation of discouragement. She had believed that everyone hated Marat as much as did she herself, and that the awful Montagnard maintained his

power by terrorism alone. Instead of wrath, she had expected rejoicing and gratitude on the part of the citizens, and behold! the air of Paris echoed only with sorrowful lamentations and cries of vengeance! So unexpected and incomprehensible was the situation that Charlotte wept: she who had calmly anticipated death on the scaffold, was crushed by the Paris mob's resentment. So hostile and numerous were their demonstrations of anger that it took almost two hours for the carriage containing Charlotte to travel the short distance which separated Saint-Germain des Près from the street in which Marat lived. It was, indeed, past midnight when the prisoner arrived at the abbey.

By the time the carriage drew up at the prison gates, Charlotte had completely recovered her composure. She told herself that these people who wailed or howled had been deceived in Marat's true character, and that the day would come when they would realise the immense service which she had rendered them. This reflection was sufficient to restore her courage and to cause her to feel once more the joy which comes from the knowledge of a duty performed.

Hardly had her name been entered in the prison register than Charlotte set to work to write the two letters which she deemed of equal importance: one to her father, the other to Barbaroux.

She began first with the letter to Monsieur Corday d'Armont. Never was letter written with greater composure or expressed more lucidly at a time so tragic as this. All the sentiments contained therein are noble and touching, set down in language as simple as was the nature of our heroine.

"Forgive me, my dear Papa," wrote Charlotte, "for having disposed of my life without first gaining your consent. I have avenged the death of many innocent victims and have prevented many disasters. The people's eyes will one day be opened, and then they will

rejoice at being delivered from this tyrant. If I made you believe that I was going to England, it was because I hoped to remain incognito, but I saw that this was not possible. I hope that you will not be plagued; in any case, you will find supporters at Caen.

"Good-bye, dear Papa, I beg you to forget me, or rather to rejoice over my fate. You know your daughter: a reprehensible motive would never have guided her steps.

"I embrace my sister, whom I love with all my heart, and all my relations.

"Let us not forget Corneille's line: 'It is crime that disgraces and not the scaffold.'"

The letter to Barbaroux was not written until the evening of the 15th of July. Quite different in character, it was a kind of address to the French people, in which the patriot explained her act and the reasons which had led her to commit it. She wrote to Barbaroux rather than to one of the other Girondists whom she had known at Caen, not because she had ever cherished the smallest feeling of love for him, but because circumstances had often brought her in closer touch with Barbaroux than with any other of the Girondists at Caen. It was he who had enabled her to be of use to Mademoiselle Forbin, to whom she had listened most often at the Intendant's at Caen, and whose speeches she had perhaps liked best, and he had been the last person to whom she had spoken before her departure to Argentan. There is nothing in the letter to Barbaroux of an intimate character. It deals principally with politics, and its contents may be summed up in these maxims, with which Charlotte ends: "The saviour of his country does not count the cost." "May peace be established as quickly as I desire!" "I have enjoyed peace for the last two days; my country's happiness is my own."

Part of Charlotte's letter to Barbaroux was intended

to be forwarded to Bougon-Longrais, *procureur-général syndic* for Calvados. These particular lines have given rise to the belief that if our heroine experienced love neither for Belzunce nor for Barbaroux, she did at least foster a tender feeling in the case of the syndic for Calvados. But there is nothing to show this in the following lines which are those into which people have chosen to read Charlotte Corday's love for Bougon-Longrais. " I beg, citizen, that you will share my letter with citizen Bougon, the *procureur-général syndic* for the department. I am not addressing it to him direct for several reasons : first, I am uncertain whether he is at Evreux at the moment ; I fear, moreover, that being naturally tender-hearted, he will feel my death, but I believe him to be a sufficiently good citizen to console himself by the hope of peace. I know how greatly he desires it, and I hope that in paving the way for it I shall have accomplished his wish."

In order to clear up completely this question of the sentiments which Charlotte Corday and Bougon-Longrais felt for each other, it will be well to read also what the syndic himself wrote to his mother concerning Charlotte a few months later, on the 4th of January, 1794, on the eve of his death at Rennes on the scaffold.

" If only in my last moments I could, like my dear Cordais [spelling of the text], have lulled myself to sleep in the sweet delusion of the near approach of law and order and peace in my country. . . . But no, I bear with me the harrowing thought that there are yet more rivers of blood to be shed !

" O, Charlotte Cordais ! O, my noble and generous friend, you, who will ever live in my memory and heart, wait for me, I am coming to join you ! Only the longing to avenge you has enabled me to bear existence up till now. I think that I have accomplished this sacred duty ; I die contented and worthy of you."

The extracts from these two letters justify us in the conclusion that Bougon-Longrais and Charlotte were friends and that Bougon-Longrais added to his friendship a warm admiration for the heroine of the 13th of July, 1793. But such sentiments provide no warrant for the tragedy written at Frankfort-on-Maine in 1797 by Baron Suerkerberg, in which he represents Charlotte as being hopelessly in love with Bougon-Longrais. She never was in love with him or with anyone else.

When Charlotte had finished writing her letter to Barbaroux, she filled in the time which remained to her at the abbey before being transferred to the Conciergerie, in mending her clothes which had been torn by the mob and in making herself a Norman cap to wear on the day of her execution. But as she had been deprived of all the money in her possession, she was unable to buy the muslin for the cap until Chauveau-Lagarde, who had been entrusted with her defence, came to ask her how she wished to be defended and what services he could render her.

In the matter of her defence, Charlotte asked Chauveau-Lagarde to make it quite clear that she was happy in having done what she had done and that she had done it unaided and of her own initiative. For service, she asked him to give her the wherewithal for making the Norman cap.

On the 16th of July Charlotte Corday was removed to the Conciergerie, and on the 17th she appeared before the Revolutionary Tribunal. Chauveau-Largarde entered so completely into his client's wishes that when reading the report of the case, written by the *avocat* himself, we have the feeling that it was Charlotte's own will which directed the argument.

" Have you anything to say in your defence ? " demands the judge of the accused.—" Nothing," replies Charlotte, " except that I achieved my purpose."

" Who was it who imbued you with such a hatred for Marat ? " continues the president.—" I had no need of

other people's hatred," retorts Charlotte, " I had enough of my own."—" But the thought of killing him must have been suggested to you by someone ? " insists the president.—" We perform ill what we have not thought out for ourselves," replies Charlotte at once.

And so the interrogation continued : terse, insinuating, persistent, on the part of the judge ; bold, unshakable, alert, in the answers of the accused, down to the moment when the president referring to the strength of the blow that had killed Marat, said to Charlotte : " You were in good practice, weren't you ? " The accused leaped up in indignation and pointing her finger at Fouquier Tinville who was prosecuting, exclaimed in tones of fury, " O, the villain, he takes me for an assassin ! " There was in this outburst of anger so much truth, so much force and simplicity that Fouquier Tinville whom she had insulted was fain to drop his eyes before the accused. Never before had so indomitable a will and so unflinching a courage as Charlotte Corday's been seen in the dock.

She was, besides, fully alive to all that was going on in the court ; so much so that the painter, Hauer, who had come for the purpose of painting her portrait, had hardly made two strokes with his brush when he was observed by Charlotte, who signed to him to let her know how he would like her to pose in the intervals of her cross-examination.

The beautiful patriot maintained her proud attitude and her serenity even when listening to the death sentence, which not only condemned her to the scaffold, but, in addition, ordered her to wear the red shift of a parricide. Back again in her cell, she asked one favour only, which was granted her, to wit, that Hauer might be allowed to finish his portrait before she went to the scaffold.

Charlotte hastened to dress herself for the last time with special consideration for the executioner. A brilliant sun was sinking slowly in the west in a sky streaked

CHARLOTTE CORDAY D'ARMONT

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with bars of crimson and gold when the virgin-martyr, wearing the Norman cap which became her to perfection, and clothed in the red shift which seemed like a flame kindled by the sun's rays, crossed the streets of Paris on the 17th of July about half-past seven in the evening, to go to her death as though it were a fête.

She enjoyed something in the nature of an apotheosis. Corneille could have conceived nothing more majestically tragic for his grand-niece. So lovely and so inspired did she look in the midst of all this blaze of colour and the emotions which she stirred as she passed on her way, that a young patriot, Adam Lux, who had come from Mayence to solicit the title of citizen from the French Republic, was overcome by her beauty and heroic bearing as he saw her go by in the tumbrel. These two young people exchanged one of those looks which are a communion of souls, and, maybe, at that moment, Charlotte loved Adam Lux with the same passion that she awoke in him.

The critic Janin has said in speaking of Charlotte Corday's death : " If a worthier child had been desired for the great Corneille, it would have been impossible to find one."

Already on the 19th of July, Adam Lux was writing Charlotte Corday's apologia.

" I saw," he said, " that unchangeable sweetness amid the howls of savages ! . . . The soft and piercing glance of her beautiful eyes, told of a soul as tender as it was fearless." Adam Lux ended his apologia by asking for a statue to be put up in memory of Charlotte Corday on the same spot where she had been executed, with the legend " Greater than Brutus " inscribed on its base. The statue was not erected, but Adam Lux was arrested and punished for his love and admiration of Charlotte by death on the scaffold on the 10th of October, 1793.

André Chenier in a dithyrambic ode hymned Charlotte Corday's praises with a passion equal to that of Adam Lux.

Later, Lamartine was to proclaim her " The angel of assassination ".

The remembrance of Charlotte took indeed quite unexpected forms. A London tradesman, Robert Sayer by name, wishing to profit by the great patriot's death to increase the sale of his pictures, but anxious not to shock his customers' feelings, caused a Charlotte Corday to be painted stabbing Marat on a sofa. It is said that this representation of the incident had a most successful sale.

MADAME ROLAND

Marie-Jeanne Phlipon, commonly called Manon, was born in Paris on the 17th or 18th of March, 1754, in a cultured though working-class circle. Her father, Monsieur Phlipon, who was an engraver, had some learning. Her mother was sufficiently fond of reading to find in it consolation for the disappointments of her married life and for the sorrow which Monsieur Phlipon's frivolities caused her.

The education of the young girl early occupied Madame Phlipon's thoughts. It was she who taught Manon her first lessons, beginning in a catholic spirit a work which was soon to be confined to the classics and later entirely to philosophy.

The mother and daughter were devoted to one another. The father was somewhat of a stranger, because he had neither their tastes, their desires, their way of looking at life, nor their love of home.

Thus, the two women lived to a great extent for each other, and Madame Phlipon observed with joy how there developed in Manon a natural charming grace, an engaging simplicity of heart, a high order of intelligence, at once thoughtful and imaginative, a nobility of soul which became more apparent each day, and an outstanding desire to please, which showed itself from the time of her first communion.

When Madame Phlipon died on the 7th of June, 1775, her daughter felt that she had lost all that was best in life and her grief was violent, deep and lasting. But it was from this time that she became her true self, thanks to her wide reading, the profound reflections to which it gave rise and the applications and conclusions which she drew from it.

Descartes and Port-Royal revealed to her her natural antipathy to casuistry and jesuitism. Voltaire sharpened her critical faculty. In the society of Plutarch's famous heroes her passionate love of country and liberty was inflamed. They imbued her also with a deep hatred for everything which was not pure and beautiful, with an absolute respect for duty, and a strong meed of devotion to her country, with an utter contempt of death and an undaunted courage. But, like all her generation, she also admired Jean-Jacques Rousseau and read him with feverish enthusiasm. Rousseau was, indeed, the first author to whom she turned with ardour after Madame Phlipon's death, and, among his works *The New Heloïse* was prime favourite. She steeped herself in it and loved the whole book. In all likelihood it was this work which gave her a taste for those complex and romantic decisions which were surprising in an otherwise strong and sensible character. Later, Mademoiselle Phlipon, who for a long time past had been Madame Roland, wrote from prison : " I fear that Rousseau has intensified my weakness."

Manon's wonderful qualities were being formed and developed when, in January, 1776, she met at the house of her friends, the demoiselles Cannet, Monsieur Roland de la Platière, inspector-general of factories in Picardy. Mademoiselle Phlipon immediately made a deep impression on the inspector. He was carried away by her beauty ; her intelligence, her charm, her gift of pleasing, all attracted him, and he desired nothing so much as to make Manon his wife.

In order to woo her gently he displayed at first a great interest in all that she thought and felt, and in the opinions which she expressed. Mademoiselle Phlipon had just returned from travelling in Italy, Switzerland, Sicily, and Malta. During her travels she had jotted down in letter-essay form, her impressions, observations, and reflections on everything which seemed to her worthy of special note. These were the letters which

Monsieur Roland begged Manon to confide to his care for a time, having them forwarded to him through his own brother, a priest at Cluny. Manon was much flattered by this request which, as Monsieur Roland had intended, advanced his love-making considerably. So much so that, a short time afterwards, Monsieur Roland de la Platière ventured to ask Manon to give him the great happiness of becoming his wife. Manon granted Monsieur Roland his wish, and, overjoyed by the news, he wrote at once to the woman who had just become his *fiancée;* "You are mine! You have sworn it. It is irrevocable! O my friend, my gentle and faithful friend, I wanted that 'yes'."

Mademoiselle Phlipon's joy seemed to equal that of Monsieur Roland; but Monsieur Phlipon proceeeded to put a spoke in their wheel. Extravagant, having always less to spend than he considered essential, he refused to give his daughter the money which she inherited from her mother. Moreover, he would have preferred Manon not to marry, and in order to cause a rupture between the engaged couple, he wrote the most insolent of letters to Monsieur Roland.

This letter threw the poor lover into the greatest consternation: "Monsieur Phlipon's disposition horrifies me," he wrote to Manon. "I love you just as much as ever, Manon! But your father, my dear! your father! I could not possibly introduce such a man to my family."

For two months, Roland and Manon were in a state of miserable uncertainty, and at last, on the 1st of November, 1776, Mademoiselle Phlipon left her father's house to go and live at the Convent of Sainte-Geneviève, where, like many other ladies, she received board, lodging and laundry for fifty crowns a year.

Before going to the convent Manon informed her erstwhile *fiancé* that their engagement was broken off, but she did not hide from him the immense pain that the decision caused her. Perhaps, woman-like, she wanted

to convey the opposite meaning and hoped that Roland would not submit to her decision. . . . But Roland, an upright and simple nature, accepted it without demur. From Sainte-Geneviève, however, Manon addressed plaints, not to say reproaches, to the inspector of factories in Picardy. He, torn between his love and his delicacy, no longer knowing where he stood with her, wrote, disheartened, to Mademoiselle Phlipon :

" You are constantly reproaching me for not understanding you. Is it my fault ? Do you not always act by contraries ? You are always complaining of what I say, and you always want me to say so much. . . . You make protestations of friendship and trust, but your behaviour betrays them. Your letters are one mass of contradictions, reproaches, bitterness and vacillation."

This complex situation came to an end in the January of 1780, when Monsieur Roland de la Platière went to see Mademoiselle Phlipon at the convent. He found her as fresh, as youthful and as bright as she had ever been. Her charms were all the more potent because he had been separated from her for several years. Then Monsieur Roland showed his passion and declared that Monsieur Phlipon's sentiments and attitude could no longer prevent their marriage.

These were exactly the words that Mademoiselle Phlipon longed to hear, but it had taken Monsieur Roland four years to say them. The future Madame Roland never forgot this. " Roland's hesitation," she wrote, " affected my feelings to such a degree as to rob me of all illusion."

The marriage of Jean Marie Roland de la Platière, inspector-general of factories in Picardy, and of Marie-Jeanne Phlipon was celebrated on the 4th of February, 1780. The bride was twenty-five and a half and the bridegroom forty-six.

Young Madame Roland was very lovely, but her

beauty was of a severe and plebeian type ill-suited to the title of "Little Madame Roland" bestowed on her in 1927 by one of our history lecturers.[1]

Her well-shaped hands were large; her feet, also well-shaped, lacked the narrowness of the aristocratic foot. Her elegant figure had an ampleness which lent to her appearance something of importance, almost of arrogance. Her mouth was large, her chin slightly tilted. Her beautiful dark eyes were quick to flash command. Her whole face recalled the medals of antiquity with their pronounced features whose stern expression proclaims a will of iron. Madame Roland's character, too, bore the stamp of an antique. Endowed with the strongest and finest qualities, which her reading had developed and strengthened, she had all the attributes of a leader. Madame Roland was born to rule, to command and to inspire.

Roland, although very different from his wife, was far from being the colourless and insignificant individual that many have chosen to suppose. He was typical of the perfectly upright man; austere, yet broad-minded; dignified, yet unostentatious; lofty in thought as in conduct. He was one of the most prominent men of his party in France, renowned for his energy and benevolent patience. He had made a complete study of all questions of manufacture in its relation to society, and held enlightened and definite views as to what should be done to revive French industries. Since his appointment as inspector in Picardy, he had been extremely active in encouraging discussions on industrial questions, supporting practical studies and in benefiting by the criticisms expressed. He became the adviser, defender and protector of manufacturers and industrialists. He knew personally all those in the districts under his jurisdiction and he conversed with them as often as possible. Better still, before his appointment as inspector, he had been

[1] Lecture on Madame Roland by Louis Madelin, reproduced in the *Revue Hebdomadaire*, February 1928.

anxious to study industries abroad as well as in France, and in the course of these studies had spent some time in Belgium, Holland, England and Germany.

As in the case of his wife, philosophy had loomed large in Roland de la Platière's studies and thoughts. Like the philosophers he, too, wished for a greater liberty in commerce, politics and religion. In a word, he was a man of high ability who had already rendered many services, who was to render greater ones yet and whom posterity has to some extent misjudged.

The newly-married pair could not set up house immediately in Picardy. They lived in an *hôtel* in Paris for the first year of their married life, and from that time onwards Madame Roland became her husband's secretary and collaborator. Her incredible energy, her intelligence, as quick as it was active, her desire to be useful and to serve her country enabled her to meet simultaneously her household duties, the demands of maternity and the difficulties arising out of the work in which she and her husband were engaged together.

Their sojourn in Picardy was of short duration on account of Monsieur Roland's rapid promotion to the post of inspector-general of manufactures in Lyons. Just at that time Madame Roland was nursing little Thérèse-Eudora, whose birth cemented the union of husband and wife ; but this important duty in no wise altered her conception that " marriage is a partnership in which the woman makes herself responsible for the happiness of two individuals ". She has written further : " I have never understood why the cares of a house, heavy though they may be, should take up a woman's whole time if she has method."

In September, 1784, the Rolands left Amiens for the Lyons district ; but they only took a *pied-à-terre* at Lyons, despite the amount of work to be done there. For reasons of economy and family feelings, the real home of the Rolands was twenty-eight kilometres north of Villefranche-sur Saône where they shared board and

lodging with Monsieur Roland's mother and with his uncle, who was a canon.

At Lyons, although her husband's active and circumspect collaborator, Madame Roland still had time and energy left to make, with Roland, numerous political friends and to contribute articles to their periodicals. For a long time now Manon had held very definite political views. It was essential to make war on the old régime, to destroy an outworn society and condition of affairs too antiquated and too tainted with prejudices, privileges and abuses to be capable of amendment. Social distinctions which were not the reward of merit fretted her to the very core of her soul. Her democratic pride caused her to suffer actual physical pain on account of the injustices which benefited the nobility at the expense of the people, that is to say, of those who, in her eyes and those of her friends, alone composed the true nation, the real *Patrie.*

In order to help to spread these ideas and sentiments, Madame Roland was very glad to collaborate regularly in the *Patriote français,* the republican journal which Brissot founded at Lyons in 1789. She also contributed to the journal *Les Amis de la Constitution,* which Bancal des Issarts founded at Clermont and afterwards published in Paris, thanks to the combined efforts of Lanthenas, the Rolands and himself. The anonymous account which Manon wrote in *Le Courier de Lyon* of the Fête of the Federation at Lyons in 1790, caused the sale of that journal to increase by 60,000 copies on that particular day. Madame Roland, indeed, did more than write for the *Patriote français.* She was enthusiastic in her persistent search for subscribers, and succeeded in obtaining a large number.

Madame Roland's feelings against the old régime were so bitter that in July, 1789, twelve days after the storming of the Bastille, she wrote to Bose :

" You are so taken up with municipal affairs that you overlook the individuals who are going to cause fresh

horrors. You are nothing more than children; your enthusiasm is merely a flash in the pan, and if the National Assembly does not sentence two illustrious persons, or if some courageous Decius does not seize them, you will be a set of fools." Madame Roland believed neither in the sincerity of the king nor in that of the court, nor in the possibility of integrity among the aristocracy. The queen, the very antithesis to herself, was an enigma that she was never able to solve and in whom she only perceived faults. She felt all the antipathy which is roused by an opposite nature, a different education, class hatred and divided aims. Rendered spiteful by her incapacity even to understand Marie-Antoinette, Madame Roland, notwithstanding her real sincerity and profound desire to be just, was cruelly and maliciously prejudiced against the queen, the while she thought herself nothing but just.

Ever since the summer of 1789 the heart and mind of the wife of the inspector-general of manufactures at Lyons had been in Paris. Manon burned with a desire to see at first hand the events which were marching close on one another's heels in the capital. She ardently wished to play her part in them, to breathe into France and her friends something of her own patriotic passion. She desired it all the more strongly because of her dissatisfaction with the National Assembly. The emotion shown by this Assembly when Queen Marie-Antoinette threw herself on its protection appeared contemptible and ridiculous in her eyes. She wrote to all the friends that she and Roland had made in the political world blaming such an attitude. What she dubbed a "weakness" on the part of the Assembly had rendered her inexorable and ever since then no effort was too great to push forward the work of propaganda to which she now devoted herself.

Great, then, was Madame Roland's delight when, after the 15th of February, 1791, Roland was sent on a mission to Paris to plead the cause of the Lyons manu-

facturers. Madame Roland naturally took part in the mission as her husband's secretary and collaborator.

The husband and wife put up at the Hôtel Britannique, rue Guénégaud. The Assembly held its sittings quite close to this hotel, in the Riding School of the Tuileries, parallel with the rue de Rivoli ; Madame Roland rushed to the Assembly directly she arrived. But her disappointment was great. Notwithstanding her grudge against the Assembly, she had expected it to be much better than it was. Even her best friends were disappointing. Brissot, with whom she had collaborated for many months past, seemed to her "timid and cold". Condorcet impressed her as "two-faced". She fancied that Fauchet "savoured of the priest." None of them had that patriotic ardour, that independence of gesture, word and action which she knew to be indispensable for a victory over the old régime. She could not even perceive among her friends the physical qualities which would be such potent aids to success.

"I saw with silent resentment," she wrote, "that if the Left was swayed by reason, honesty and high principles, the Right had advantages which I should have been glad to see transmitted to the other side, because of the great effect which they had on the Assembly. I would mention particularly, good elocution, a charm of expression which lends polish to the tone of the voice, if I may so express myself, acquired by a superior education and long intercourse with good society."

Then Madame Roland had the idea and ambition to gather round her all the political friends whom she and Roland had made, in order to try and give them what they lacked and to fire them with her own enthusiasm. She set to work to accomplish her object on the 20th of February, the day on which their old friends began to come, with new friends, to Monsieur and Madame Roland de la Platière's house.

In this manner Madame Roland's first salon came into being, and though a political salon, it was composed,

for the most part, of exceedingly upright people of high intelligence, but with timid natures and wavering opinions.

Nevertheless, in the first month of its existence there were among those who frequented this salon men whose political views differed widely from those of the Rolands and who, consequently, became their most terrible enemies, such as Maximilien Robespierre, one of the first to visit Madame Roland. Buzot, on the contrary, who was very active in helping her to increase the number of habitués at her salon, Pétion, Clavière, Grégoire, Brissot, Volfius, Antoine Garrau, Thomas Paine, who joined the group in April, 1791, all shared entirely the views and hopes of their hosts.

These meetings at Madame Roland's seemed to serve so useful a purpose that they took place four times a week between the hour at which the Assembly rose and that of the opening of the clubs. Here, measures were suggested for the good of the nation ; here, means were sought to gain more influence and to obtain the application of the measures that had been deemed essential. Here, too, the people's needs were discussed and the tactics of the court criticised.

Madame Roland took the greatest possible interest in these reunions. It was by means of them that she gained her influence and power over the group. Her clear and eloquent exposition of her views and desires, her precise and lucid conception of what the government should be, her power to idealise, to colour and to give concrete shape to what France's future would be when the old world was vanquished and the new ideas initiated, endowed her with a transcendent authority which won over everybody to her views, and made her dominate the minds of the company. Besides, no one took such trouble as did she to serve the cause. On all these several counts she very quickly became the ideal figure of the Revolution, the personification *par excellence* of the Great and Pure Republic of which she dreamed. Her

friends accepted the *intransigeance* of her principles and the exigencies of her will because she had charmed and subjugated them. Already she had ventured to say to these demi-poets, to these brilliant and voluptuous orators, for such the greater number of them were :

" Even civil war, absolutely horrible though it may be, would advance the regeneration of our manners and customs. We must be ready for everything, even to die without regret."

On the 23rd of June, 1791, with a determination that would suffer neither delay nor consideration, Madame Roland demanded a general convocation of the primary assemblies which governed the departments, in order that they should declare themselves in favour of removing Louis from the throne.

On the 24th of June, she proved that all regency was impossible and that it was at least essential to suspend the king. But on the 3rd of September, 1791, Madame Roland was obliged to close her salon in the rue Guénégaud, which she had opened on the previous 20th of February, because her husband's mission to Paris was completed.

It was with the deepest regret and reluctance that the strong Republican tore herself away from the centre of the political events in France, where she had already played so important a part, and reached Lyons, worried and preoccupied.

But Lyons was not to be an obstacle in the way of Madame Roland's political scheme for long. Less than three months after her return from Paris, Roland learned that his post was abolished. He became, in consequence, master of his own time. On hearing these tidings, Manon soon caused her husband to make up his mind to set out again for the capital, and the end of December, 1791, saw them installed, for the second time, in Paris.

Never had Madame Roland been more enthusiastic, or better equipped than now for the struggle which she was

carrying on. She returned to Paris sure of the success of republican ideas, with an invincible driving force, a youthfulness of mind, a freshness of sentiments and ideas, capable of restoring life to the least vigorous and the most weary politicians. Her born gift of speaking had become perfected and strengthened, and the fact that she could rely on her eloquence added to its force. She knew well that no audience could listen to her without coming under the spell of her passionate speech, which was nevertheless full of a simple grace and never made use of any but the fitting and exact expressions. One day when she was told that Camille Desmoulins showed the greatest antipathy to her and could not understand the influence which she exerted over so many people, " Because he has never heard me, that is why," she retorted archly, and with self-assurance.

No sooner were they settled in their home than the Rolands reopened their salon, and the success of these second receptions far surpassed that of the first. The *habitués* of the first salon hastened to seek a lead for their guidance from the woman who had charmed and enlightened them and they bore along with them a host of new friends. Barbaroux, Vergniaud, Lanthenas, Guadet, Gensonné, Bose, Champagneux, to mention only the most celebrated. Madame Roland was in truth the great orator of the second salon. All these men, who quickly came to be called Rolandists, before their name was enlarged into that of Girondists, derived from the region of which the greater number were deputies, drank in Madame Roland's words and obeyed her commands. All were enamoured of her charms and her virtues. All submitted to her inflexible will, wherein lay her chief power. They realised that nothing could shake it. They were inspired, too, by her supreme scorn of consequences, and it was certainly in part this great admiration as well as the great confidence felt in " La Reine Roland " which carried Roland to the ministry of the interior on the 24th of March, 1792.

At the ministry Roland did nothing without consulting his wife. Both were the vigilant republican sentinels who watched at close quarters all the actions of the court. They foiled its intrigues, frustrated its plots as, for example, the setting up outside Paris of an intrenched camp devoted to the king. Roland would not even comply with the details of court etiquette. One evening at a ball given by the king, the minister of the interior arrived in thick walking shoes. The master of the ceremonies stopped him at the door, drawing his attention to the fact that he was not wearing the regulation buckles on his shoes. "What, sir! Without buckles!" But Roland, who declined to make even the most trifling concession to the court, forced his way in with the retort: "Yes, sir! Without buckles!"

Sometimes, however, Roland would appear to have been inclined to believe in Louis XVI's good-natured intentions and to discuss with him certain points on which it seemed to him that they might agree. But Madame Roland, who no longer believed in the king's sincerity any more than in that of the queen, disapproved of these discussions, which she called compromises.

At last, on the 10th of June, 1792, Roland, convinced that the king was betraying the Constitution, and determined that all France should know it, employed a procedure which was without precedent, in order to inform the nation of the king's intrigues. He resigned his position as minister of the interior; but instead of sending in his resignation to the king, as was customary, he sent it in to the Legislative Assembly. The Assembly was obliged to read aloud all the official documents which it received. That was precisely what Roland wanted; for, in his letter of resignation he set forth, under the pretext of explaining the reason why he was leaving the ministry, all the accusations which he brought against the king, and not only were these clearly formulated but he claimed, further, to have proved them.

No more terrible a blow could have been dealt royalty than this open letter of Roland's. But for it it is probable that August the 10th would not have happened so soon and perhaps it never would have happened at all. It is, therefore, most important to know whence came the idea of such a proceeding which, when all is said and done, was illegal, since even the Constitution of 1791, which divided the power between the Legislative Assembly and the king, left to the latter the choice and the dismissal of ministers.

The letter was in Madame Roland's handwriting, but as Manon was her husband's secretary, that proves nothing in regard to its authorship. However, this argument to clear Madame Roland of an act which, to say the least, was cruel, leads us nowhere, for in her memoirs Madame Roland states that she and she alone was responsible for the wording of the letter.

To her mind, as a Republican, such a letter was a duty, for the king had, in fact, failed the Constitution. When leaving the ministry of the interior on the 13th of June, Madame Roland exclaimed :

" I was never proud of Roland's entry into the ministry, but I am of his retirement ! "

Roland's last act as minister made him very popular throughout France. The nation was grateful to him for having called upon it to judge for itself, and was never tired of singing the former minister's praises. Paris acclaimed him, his friends extolled him, his wife's delight was two-fold in having herself pushed him along the path which led to glory, and everyone regarded Roland and his party as the hope of the country. Never had the Girondists been so powerful, and never had they seemed so near being masters of France's destiny.

Unfortunately for them, they were poets rather than politicians. They lacked the passionate, steadfast will which was the strength of the woman who inspired them. They shrank from decisions. Their imagination undermined their courage and impaired their judgment. The

party which was jealous of them and which wanted to snatch power by hook or by crook, the Montagnards, watched the Girondists with malignant spite in order to profit by their mistakes, especially now that Roland had become so popular. This national popularity of the Girondists thus became in the Assembly a source of profound uneasiness. Such was the situation when the insurrection of the 10th of August, 1792, drove the king from his palace and made him the prisoner of the Assembly, which was henceforward determined to depose him. The Montagnards were the instigators of the policy of the 10th of August and intended to make the most of it. For this reason they sought at one and the same time to compromise by the events of the day the rival party whose popularity exasperated them, and to get rid of the king as quickly as possible. Nothing could serve their plan better than to recall the Girondist Roland to the ministry under the pretext that his popularity demanded his return, while hoping that the difficulties of the moment would quickly wear him out. This was the machiavellian policy pursued by the Montagnards.

Roland returned to the ministry on the 10th of August, 1792, but he was nothing more than the clerk of the ultra-revolutionists of whom he disapproved. Neither he nor Madame Roland had a voice in anything in that ministry. All authority was in the hands of the Paris Commune and its partisans. The post, indeed, of minister of justice had been given by the Mountain to one of the most remarkable, but by no means least fierce of its members—the deputy Danton. It was under this second Roland ministry that Danton made his most famous speech on the 2nd of September, 1792 :

" The country is in danger, the Commune proclaims the need to save it. The whole of the people will be divided into three armies, the one will march to the frontiers, the other will guard the intrenchments, and the third, with pikes, will watch suspects at home : we must dare, and again dare and for ever dare and the

country will be saved." Thus the minister of justice was at no pains to hide that the government's orders came from the Commune and not from the ministry. In December, Chabot and Marat dared to attack the minister Roland's honesty at the Convention. Madame Roland, indignant, and relying on the wonderful eloquence which was one of her great forces, went personally to the Assembly. Approaching the bar, she began amid the prevailing tumult and commotion to defend Roland's honour. Her enemies attempted to drown the sound of her voice. But Madame Roland was mistress of herself; all that she said was so just, so true and so eloquently expressed that gradually a silence that might be felt reigned in the hall and the great Girondist finished the defence of her husband amid general admiration. It was one of her greatest triumphs.

Unfortunately, it was not followed up, and despite their ardent and persistent desire Roland and his wife were unable to do anything to save King Louis XVI's head. Their party, through pusillanimity and fear, followed the Mountain in large numbers and voted like them for the king's death without realising that this vote was its own death sentence! Roland left this luckless ministry the day after the king's death, the 22nd of January, 1793. The Mountain had completely attained its object: Roland was discredited and disheartened and his party vanquished for ever through its own fault.

From now onwards the ex-minister was denounced every morning in Marat's journals and every evening at the Jacobin Club. He was accused of malpractices, and Roland, feeling his world crumbling beneath him, his reputation as well as his party, no longer had the strength to put up a defence and abandoned himself to the fate which overwhelmed him.

But—like the valiant woman that she was—Madame Roland could not give up the struggle and meekly accept defeat. Enveloped by the storm of revolution,

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MADAME ROLAND

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without the support of her husband, she looked around for someone able to help her, someone who desired as she did, to continue the struggle, even if, in the end, it meant renouncing the hope of victory.

It was then that she divined, or rather perceived, all that there was in Buzot's nature which answered to her own : the same way of thinking, the same disinterestedness, the same enthusiasms, the same love of country, served by a captivating and passionate eloquence which enchanted Madame Roland. It was on Buzot that Manon pinned her hope, and it was to him that she confided her perplexities and desires. Buzot had for a long time secretly nursed in his heart an ardent passion and an enthusiastic admiration for Madame Roland. To serve his idol, to work for her, to share her cares, to lighten her burdens and her labours seemed to him so great a happiness that he feared lest he had misunderstood what she asked of him. But Manon renewed her entreaties and Buzot was the happiest of men. He had, in addition to serving his love, the rare chance to work for his friends and for their convictions.

Soon, Madame Roland, carried away by her feelings of gratitude and admiration for Buzot and by her faith in him, felt her heart kindled to love by the warm sentiments of the man who was working with and for her. After thirteen years of a perfect union with Roland, of complete intimacy with her husband, and though she was past thirty-nine, she realised that she had only esteem for the father of her young daughter, that the difference of rank had always separated Roland and herself, that the long interval which the former inspector of manufactures had allowed to elapse between his first thought of marriage with her and the execution of his project afforded ample proof that there had never been any spontaneity in their union, and that passion was conspicuous by its absence.

She remarked, in a word, for the first time, that while she was only thirty-nine, Roland was very nearly sixty.

But Manon did not intend to keep such sentiments and reflections a secret. Although the part of her memoirs which confess to her love for Buzot has been lost or destroyed, we know that directly she was certain of her love for him she made up her mind to tell her husband. Proud and candid, almost to the point of unconscious cruelty, she explained her feelings to Roland, and made a full confession of the passion which bound her to Buzot. She was, moreover, determined not to admit anything carnal into her ardent love for him, regarding with contempt these vulgar weaknesses. She wanted to remain pure, to love Buzot in an ideal way and to continue to devote herself entirely to the honour and glory of Roland. The scaffold helped her to fulfil this programme, which was as imposing as it was bold.

As to Roland, his wife's avowal caused him the greatest sorrow of his life. Indeed, all the calumnies heaped on him by his enemies since he had left the ministry seemed trivial by the side of Manon's statement. This industrious, well-educated man, conscientious and austere, had never had but one weakness, one single star in the whole of his life, which drew him by its dazzling brightness—his immense love for his wife. He suffered so acutely, so intensely and so profoundly that he became indifferent to everything except Manon's love. Henceforth, gloomy and disillusioned, his suffering could be read in his face and he wished for nothing so much as death.

On the 31st of May, 1793, a warrant was issued for the arrest of the ex-minister. Roland asked for nothing better than to be arrested. But by dint of persuasion, insistence and entreaties Madame Roland prevailed on her husband to escape by the back door of the house in which they were living. Hardly had Roland's affection for her made him grant this concession to his loved wife than Madame Roland rushed to the Convention to try and justify her husband. She expected to meet with the success of December, 1792. But calumny had done

its work. In the eyes of the mob Roland had become the extortionate minister; his friends the fomentors of disorder, who aspired to stir up the provinces against Paris in order to remain the masters of France. Madame Roland's eloquence, more vehement and convincing than ever, was wrecked in face of so much prejudice. In vain she expended her great talent to win over the Assembly, her splendid action only caused her to be arrested in the end. If she had wished she could, even at the last hour, have avoided arrest, for the bookseller, Panckonque, offered her the means of escape by securing her an asylum at Marly. Madame Roland energetically and obstinately refused the salvation which came through the channel of Panckonque. Why, it may be asked, this refusal, which removed her last chance of gaining the liberty of which her friends had so much need? Perhaps it was caused by her stoicism, perhaps by the steadfast hope that she still cherished of a Girondist victory. But, thrown into the prison of the Abbaye on the 1st of June, she immediately denounced the illegality of her arrest to the minister of justice. Then, as a matter of form, the Committee of General Security caused her to be released on the 24th of June at eleven o'clock in the morning and the same day at two o'clock in the afternoon she was imprisoned in Sainte-Pélagie, while her daughter was taken charge of by Creuzé-Latouche.

In prison Madame Roland showed wonderful composure, energy and dignity of demeanour. She won the affections of her guards and did not hesitate to write a letter of reproach and advice to Robespierre. Her friends visited her, she wrote many letters which she succeeded in getting through to the outside world, and was able to remain the controlling brain of the Girondist party. When she was not writing letters she worked at her memoirs which she was anxious to leave in as complete a form as possible. She also prepared her defence as well as that of her party because she did not

wish to leave her cause in the hands of an *avocat*, having more confidence in her own powers than in those of others.

At last, when she had finished her appointed task, she thought of letting herself starve to death. But at that moment she learned of the decree of the 3rd of October 1793, issued against the Girondists. By this decree the Convention outlawed twenty Girondist deputies who had fled, forty-one were arraigned, and seventy-three were arrested. It was the proscription *en masse* of the Gironde. At this news, Madame Roland gathered her forces together, agitated afresh against her imprisonment, and asked to be allowed to give evidence at the trial of the Girondists. Her request seemed likely to be granted. On the 24th of October she was conducted to the witness's waiting-room at the trial of the Girondists, but she was left there the whole day without being interrogated. In the adjoining room Hébert and Chabot heard what she said and set down in writing all that they could use against Madame Roland and the Girondists by twisting her remarks to suit their purpose.

On the 31st of October, towards mid-day, the twenty-one Girondists sentenced to death were conducted from the Conciergerie to the scaffold. Buzot was not among them. He was sheltering in the neighbourhood of Bordeaux. Later, in 1794, following the advice which Madame Roland had written him from prison, he took poison in order to escape falling into the hands of his enemies. His portrait, with a few words written on it in his own handwriting, was one of the last objects with which Madame Roland parted in prison ; but as she did not want it to fall into the hands of the Montagnards, she sent it in the end to a friend two or three days before the beginning of her trial. It was discovered in 1863, lying about among vegetables on a stall in the market at Batignoles.

The trial of Madame Roland began on the morning of the 1st of November. The beautiful Girondist appeared

before her accusers garbed in white, with her lovely hair loose. She had prepared a "Scheme of Defence," but she was not allowed to read it. The indictments brought against her were: (1) Federalism; (2) Conspiring with the enemies of the Republic; and (3) Complicity in the ex-minister Roland's escape. Madame Roland underwent two examinations; one on the 1st of November, the other on the 3rd. During the second examination the painter David put a false and insulting question concerning her relations with Buzot. But, strong in the knowledge of a clear conscience, Madame Roland replied with dignified calm: "I knew all my men friends with Roland and through him, and I had for them the degree of esteem and affection which each one of them seemed to me to merit."

Madame Roland's answers are of little importance from the point of view of the *dénouement* of her trial. She was condemned in advance. The Tribunal pronounced the penalty of death by applying the law of the 16th of December, 1792, which had been voted under Roland's ministry.

"You judge me worthy," she said after hearing the sentence, "to share the fate of the great men whom you have assassinated; I will try to take with me to the scaffold the courage which they displayed there."

With these words Madame Roland left the Tribunal as she had formerly left her salon—dignified, calm, crowned with the halo of her genius and moral grandeur.

In the evening she had her last dinner with the coiner, Lamarche. The latter, who, like Madame Roland, belonged to the next batch to be conveyed to the guillotine, was trembling with fear and could neither speak nor eat. Madame Roland was so clever in distracting his mind that before long she succeeded in making him eat and even laugh. But overcome by his former fear at the moment of departure, Lamarche made a dash for the grim tumbrel without being aware of what he did. "You are not very polite, Lamarche," observed Madame

Roland, smiling. "A Frenchman should never forget 'Ladies first'." Madame Roland's last friend, Sophie Grandchamp, who watched her go by in the tumbrel, remarked that she had never seen her look "so fresh, so calm or so smiling".

It is said that as she passed before the Statue of Liberty in the Place de la Révolution, Madame Roland exclaimed: "O Liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name!" If she did not utter this phrase, such a sentiment was certainly in her heart. This heroine did not suffer at the prospect of a violent death, but from a profound disappointment which events had inflicted on her. As one of her greatest biographers, Cl. Perroud, has said: "She believed in virtue and in glory, she threw herself into the Revolution with lofty enthusiasm and it was this Revolution which was to engulf her."

She mounted the scaffold (8th of November, 1793) proud, resolute and heroic, the ideal personification of the party to which she had brought honour and glory and which had not always been able to follow her counsels or support her policy.

At Rouen, Roland, who had found refuge among some old friends, learned through the newspapers of the death of the woman whom he had loved so much and without whom life was unbearable. Saying nothing to his friends about his overwhelming sorrow, he announced his intention of going for a walk in the woods, and took the coach to Paris. A few miles outside Rouen, at a spot where the first wood ran alongside the road, he descended and entered the wood, stopping at the foot of a giant oak, on which he cut with his knife the words: "Passer-by, respect the remains of an honest man." Then, unsheathing his sword-stick, fell upon the weapon, which pierced his heart.

ANNE-JOSÈPHE TERWAGNE, KNOWN AS THÉROIGNE DE MÉRICOURT

Few personalities have given rise to so many different stories as the daughter of the farmer Terwagne, known as Théroigne de Méricourt.

To many this woman in the first months of the great Revolution was only one of the numerous paid creatures whom the Duc d'Orléans, later Philippe Egalité, used to foment the disorder and confusion and to create ever greater difficulties for the king, whom he desired to supplant.

Others think that the girl Terwagne was a spy in the pay of the Austrian emperor, Leopold II.

The majority merely recognise in her one of those furies of the Revolution, belonging to the race of the *Tricoteuses*, whom we have seen taking a lively pleasure in the trial of Queen Marie-Antoinette,[1] and whom we shall meet with in all the dramas of the Terror inflaming the executioners and encouraging acts of violence.

It is also claimed that Terwagne was nothing more than a crazy person whom all kinds of excesses, coupled with the humiliations of her life as a *déclassée*, led to madness.

And lastly, the most recent opinion regards her as a pioneer of feminism.

Before adopting any of these theories, it is necessary to brush aside the legends woven about her first by her contemporaries and then by Lamartine and Michelet. We must know who she was, whence she came, and what she did.

[1] See the chapter on "Marie-Antoinette: Unhappy Queen".

Théroigne de Méricourt was not a Frenchwoman by birth, but a Luxemburger. She was born in the little village of Marcourt on the Ourthe in 1762. Her father was a man of property. Terwagne was in fact a well-to-do peasant who cultivated his own land with the help of his family. The young girl had the misfortune to lose her mother, whose maiden name was Elizabeth Lahaye, when only five years old. The father re-married soon afterwards, and then the child had a bad time under the paternal roof. One of her father's sisters took her in and placed her in a convent until the time of her first communion.

When she came out of the convent, the little girl could neither read nor write, in spite of her precocious intelligence, because the nuns had only taught her to sew in accordance with instructions received from her aunt. The latter intended to take every possible advantage of her niece's ability in this direction. Then, the child, exasperated by the unreasonable demands of this rapacious relative, returned to her father's house.

But here the orphan found her stepmother worse than ever. On this account, before she had completed her fourteenth year, she ran away for good and all. She remained for some time with relations at Xhoris, returned to try and live again with her aunt, but after fresh difficulties with the latter, she hired herself out as a cowherd in a village in Limbourg. However the young Luxemburger did not remain long at her very bucolic occupation ; for some months later we meet her again at Liège entrusted with the entire education of three young children !

In 1778, she was at Antwerp as lady companion to a Madame Colbert, who had a daughter of about the same age as Terwagne. Madame Colbert played the part of a true mother to the stranger. She had her taught not only reading and writing, but also music, like her own child. The two young girls sang numerous duets together, and as she listened to them, Madame Colbert made up her mind that music would afford the best means for her

protégée to earn her living. About the same time, the young companion took as her Christian name the name of her father, altering it a little and henceforward called herself Mademoiselle Théroigne. Subsequently she tacked on to her Christian name the surname de Méricourt which was nothing more than a corruption of the word " Marcourt ", the name of her native village. It was after this wise that Terwagne's daughter came to call herself Théroigne de Méricourt.

But she became more and more interested in music. She worked at it daily with increasing ardour, so much so, that Madame Colbert, who was obliged to spend several months in London, conceived the idea of taking with her her companion, who, for the last eighteen months, had made such serious efforts to acquire real musical talent. She wanted to see if Théroigne could not now turn to account all that she had learnt.

The attempt surpassed the expectations of Madame Colbert and her young friend. Théroigne made her début as a singer at one of the sacred concerts in London and not only received great applause but was well paid into the bargain. Madame Colbert had been right in thinking that the English, being, in general, richer than continental families, would remunerate her protégée's talent at a higher rate.

But soon love made a more passionate appeal to Théroigne than art. In 1783 she yielded to the importunity of a young and wealthy Englishman of nineteen, who, she claimed later, had promised to marry her as soon as he came of age. Whether or not the promise had been made, the marriage did not take place, although it is possible that Théroigne was really married in England. She had, in fact, a daughter, who was registered at birth under an English name, which the child continued to bear to the day of its death in 1788.

Before this date, Théroigne had made a sensational début in Paris. She went there at the end of 1784 or at the beginning of 1785 under the name of Madame de

Campinados, and immediately her magnificent diamonds, the most beautiful, it was said, that had ever been seen in the French capital, commanded admiration. She was often to be seen at the Opera in gowns as elegant as they were costly. Théroigne had no doubt dug up the name of Campinados from recollections of her childhood, for it belonged to relations of her father, but of course without the "de".

At the moment when the young stranger took Paris by storm she was a pretty brunette of twenty-two with a specially attractive profile. She had a tilted nose which gave a saucy, mischievous expression to her face. Her features were irregular, but she had large blue eyes, whose expression, at times far-away and sad, was startling by the side of that tilted nose and mischievous look. There was something very sprightly, petulant even, almost martial, in her whole person. Her waist was round and tiny, almost wasp-like, which added greatly to the attraction of the young woman, who was not tall, but just of medium height.

Paris was still seeking information regarding the identity of Madame de Campinados, when it learned that the Marquis Anne Nicolas de Persan, Comte de Dun et de Pateau, master of requests and intendant of the department of tolls, a sexagenarian, renowned as much for the impetuosity of his affections as for his large fortune, had just recognised by a deed that he owed Mademoiselle Théroigne de Méricourt, known as Madame de Campinados, a life annuity of five thousand livres, free of all income tax, the said annuity to be paid in two half-yearly instalments.

It is plain that the marquis was paying right royally for the favours he sought from the lady, and that even if Théroigne did not own the fortune which her mode of living led the world to suppose, her lover's generosity assured her of ease and comfort for the rest of her life.

But it did not ensure Monsieur de Persan's happiness. The marquis was unhappy in his love. Théroigne proved

to be discouragingly cold, seeming to have no passion for anything but music and its interpreters. In vain the marquis added present on present to the munificent annuity which his man of business paid regularly to his mistress, Théroigne always turned a deaf ear to his declarations. In 1788, she even announced her decision to study music and singing in Italy, after which she intended to make her debut on the stage at Genoa.

The lover begged and implored ; the lady was adamant. In spite of everything the marquis was happy in having secured for the future artist a comfortable competency for life and he told his beloved that notwithstanding the pain she had caused him he should always esteem and love her.

Théroigne wished to meet in Italy a singer who had made a name in London and Paris, a certain Tenducci, who was then long past fifty, but who had so fascinated the fair lady that she had lent him all the money he wanted, not to speak of the numerous lessons for which she had paid him.

But they had hardly arrived in Genoa when they quarrelled. Théroigne, who was not lacking in business acumen, brought an action against Tenducci over her engagement at Genoa. She won her case, and immediately afterwards started to travel across Italy with one of her brothers. They were near Naples when the States-General of France were convoked for the purpose of regulating the financial situation of the kingdom, which was lamentable.

This convocation made an immense impression on the mind of Théroigne. She suddenly felt that the history of humanity had reached an hour of crisis, that a general transformation would result from the events taking place around her, and, impulsive and ardent, she was caught and entirely swept away by the fever of excitement over the impending changes.

She left Naples in haste, journeying to Paris by long stages and, by the middle of June, found herself in the

midst of the popular ferment. What were the motives which changed this erstwhile light o' love into one of the most active workers during the early days of the Revolution ?

Mounier chooses to see in her a hireling of the Duc d'Orléans. But it was just when the Duc d'Orléans should have paid her that for the first time Théroigne was short of money. Notwithstanding the annuity which she continued to receive regularly from the Marquis de Persan between the 8th of June, 1789, and the 7th of May, 1790, Théroigne deposited securities in return for the sum of eight thousand francs at the Mont-de-Piété in Paris. The official list is still in existence of these loans on security which were granted to her precisely at the time when, according to Mounier and other Royalist writers, she ought to have been receiving handfuls of gold from Philippe-Egalité's agents, as remuneration for the zest with which she fomented the disturbances that were to facilitate d'Orléans' accession to power. This list of loans is surely eloquent proof that Théroigne at this period had no fresh source of income. She lived by what she could make and since politics had become her sole passion, so that henceforward no lover could boast of capturing her heart or of being admitted to her bed, her resources which now only comprised the annuity from her former lover, became more and more inadequate on account of the general rise in prices and because she often entertained her republican friends to dinner.

Brissot, Camille Desmoulins, Chénier, Clootz, Fabre, Saint-Just, Robespierre, Barnave, Raune, Pétion, Siéyes and many another sat at Théroigne de Méricourt's table. But for all that has been said on the subject neither Mirabeau nor Philippe-Egalité were ever to be seen there. The men who in '89 met at Théroigne's house had not the refined and expensive vices of the Prince d'Orléans and Mirabeau, nor the prince's wealth. They were, for the most part, strugglers, full of hope and ambition, but of very small means. It is true that some of them,

Camille Desmoulins among others, have been accused of being in the pay of d'Orléans. But Camille Desmoulins does not appear to have been always in funds any more than Théroigne. And besides, even if at a given moment Camille Desmoulins or any other of the people who resorted to Théroigne's house, did work for Philippe d'Orléans, this is no proof that the young woman acted similarly.

Amid her political friends Théroigne de Méricourt was more brilliant and more captivating than ever. As the result of her wide reading a stock of varied and picturesque quotations adorned her conversation. Her enthusiasm for her new life invested all she said with a passion which she had never showed in love. In short, for the first time in her life, this beautiful woman appeared absolutely and entirely happy.

What was the origin of the happiness which irradiated her whole being at this period ? It was because the first acts of the Revolution, its theories and principles, were in complete harmony with her aspirations. This spirited woman was much more intellectually than physically passionate. Above all, enthusiasm was necessary for her happiness. Now, nothing was better calculated to rouse her enthusiasm than the movement for reform, the demand for justice and equality, which marked the beginning of the French Revolution. Théroigne believed that the society which was about to emerge from the Revolution would be free from injustices, inequalities, and class distinctions, happy in the feeling of fraternity by which she believed it would be governed. Difficulties, she thought, would be smoothed away because man's love for mankind would form the basis of the new society. To assist at the birth of this ideal state in which woman would be man's equal in everything, Théroigne threw herself headlong into the struggle from which such a society was to emerge.

No, it was not any grudge against the past that urged her forward ; nor her need of emotional excitement, nor

incipient madness ; it was a beautiful chimera, such as vivid and heroic imaginations create in their day-dreams, which drew her into the vortex. Théroigne believed all the more strongly and sincerely in her dream because she had a simpler, more primitive nature and because everyone around her fostered the same enthusiasm even more passionately than did she herself. Her beliefs, her temperament, her humble origin, her natural excitability, her unchecked enthusiasms, all were to impel Théroigne to stop at nothing, not even violence and crime, in order that the cause which she had so much at heart might triumph. The life of her youth had taught her to regard as puerile all refinement and delicacy of feelings or actions. Thus, she did not shrink from going into the street to take an active part in the riots, when she deemed the time had arrived for her to do so. She even came to regard the riots as the only means that the people had at their command to force the government and the class which had so ill-used them to listen to their just demands.

These were the ideas and sentiments which fortified Théroigne in the revolutionary days of 1789. But, here too, the part she played has been distorted and exaggerated. Lamartine, Michelet and the Goncourts represent her as one of the chief agents in the storming of the Bastille (the 14th of July, 1789).

" Intoxicated with powder and shot, and drunk with blood, she rushed hither and thither, conquering and killing. It was she who stormed one of the towers of the Bastille," wrote the Goncourts.

But, according to Théroigne's own testimony, as well as to that of many who knew her, it is highly improbable that she assisted in any way in the taking of the Bastille. While the mob hurled themselves with ruthless fury against this citadel, because in their eyes it was the symbol of all that was most arbitrary in the ancient régime, the beautiful Luxemburger was walking in the Palais Royal, at that time the rendezvous of ladies of

fashion. She knew nothing of the storming of the Bastille until the evening of the 14th of July.

But there is no doubt that Théroigne de Méricourt took a very active part in the days of the 5th and 6th of October. She did not distribute money to the soldiers as claimed by the Royalist journals, which have nothing on which to support their affirmations except the evidence of three witnesses, who contradicted each other, and not one of whom ventured to swear on oath that they were positive of what they asserted ; the young Republican's task on those particular days consisted in inflaming and sustaining the courage of the women, in exhorting them to remain firm in their demands and in insisting that the king and his family should leave Versailles, where, she said, he was surrounded by foreign soldiers, enemies of the people, and by men and women who were ignorant of the nation's needs.

At this time Théroigne was accusing Queen Marie-Antoinette of almost all the evils from which France was suffering, and it is quite likely that she would have been proud to rid the country of her. One thing, in any case, is certain, to wit, that Théroigne exerted an immense influence during these October days. Whatever may have been written, the 5th and 6th of October were in truth not mainly the works of Orléanist propaganda, but, as has been so eloquently demonstrated by the lucid articles on this subject which appeared in the *Revue Historique*, 1898 and 1899, these days were inevitable after the night of the 4th of August, and it was the women's initiative that precipitated the date.

The more Théroigne de Méricourt devoted herself to winning success for the new ideas, the more embarrassed became her circumstances. She wrote to her banker, Monsieur Perregaud, father of the future Maréchal Marmont, letters which complained loudly of her financial difficulties. These letters are the best reply to the *Actes des Apôtres*, the Royalist journal, which, from the date of its first issue, the 10th of November, 1789, until

that of its last, ten quarters later, never ceased in every single number to assert that the Prince d'Orléans was showering gold on Théroigne de Méricourt.

Théroigne, when thus attacked, did not dream of defending herself; she was occupied with trying to obtain as quickly as possible, the complete and exact application of the principles of the French Revolution which had been promulgated during the first months in the "Declaration of the Rights of Man." These rights the young woman desired to see given, not only to men, but also to women. She maintained that the law should make no distinction whatsoever between the sexes. It was in this mood that she founded on the 10th of January, 1790, in concert with Raune, the mixed club of the "Friends of the Law."

The two principal objects of this club were:

1. To educate the People to be worthy of their rights.
2. To make women leave their households to serve their country.

But, as Théroigne herself acknowledged, the club did not expand. It always remained a club in its infancy, and came to an end after twenty meetings or so. Moreover, all the attempts made by women to emancipate themselves with the aid of the revolutions of 1789 and 1793 were in vain. They were faced with the revolutionaries who were their fiercest opponents. It was because of this opposition that the "Friends of the Law" were unable to develop any more than the other feminist clubs.

Not content to act in one group only, Théroigne de Méricourt went in great state to the Club of the Cordeliers between the 20th and the 25th of February, 1790. Camille Desmoulins greeted her with the flattering title "Queen of Sheba." Théroigne, well-read and apt as ever, at once replied to Camille Desmoulins with a speech in which she asked the Cordeliers to show that they had the wisdom of Solomon by opening a national subscription for the purpose of building the Temple of legislative power on the site of the Bastille.

" God's only temple," she said, " is the temple of the Declaration of the Rights of Man."

For the rest, Théroigne repeated this idea, as she did others dear to her, in many places. But at the end of 1790 she left Paris to go to Belgium.

Why ?

Some have claimed that she had a revolutionary mission which consisted in inciting Flanders to rise. The Royalists, headed by Mercy d'Argenteau, at that time the Austrian emperor's minister plenipotentiary in the Low Countries, persisted in seeing in Théroigne the Duc d'Orléans' accomplice coming to carry on in Flanders the Orléanist work begun in Paris.

It is not very likely that either of these opinions contains the truth. Théroigne appears to have left Paris at the end of 1790 for a two-fold reason. First, because le Châtelet was just then investigating the affair of the October days. Théroigne, having taken an active part in them against the royal family, might well have deemed it prudent to put a frontier between herself and a court of justice which, after all, derived from the king. Moreover, having become a very prominent personage in Paris and her resources not allowing her to continue to cut a big figure, it is possible that she was not sorry to retire for a time, on the score of economy, from the scene of her exploits. The country that, naturally enough, she chose on leaving Paris, was her native land, which she had always loved, where she had many brothers who were dear to her and whom she helped, where, in short, she was sure of making friends very quickly. Indeed, the old priest who had prepared Théroigne for her first communion was still in Belgium. She knew this, and directly she arrived, she sent him stockings and petticoats to the value of about one hundred francs to distribute among the poor of his flock, whom he dearly loved.

But, in spite of everything, the Austrians and the *émigrés* persisted in seeing a conspirator in Théroigne de Méricourt. For this reason they decided, under the

lofty patronage of Mercy d'Argenteau, to take advantage of her sojourn in Belgium to seize her. During the night of the 15th–16th of February, 1791, the Chevalier de La Valette, the Comte de St. Malin and some Austrian soldiers noiselessly entered the inn where Théroigne de Méricourt was staying, and, before she had time to be aware of the danger which threatened her, she was surrounded and bidden to dress herself with all haste in order to accompany those sent to fetch her. This abduction was so rapid that the young woman forgot to take with her the book which was her delight at the moment, and which was none other than one of the works of the Latin philosopher, Seneca.

From the frontier of Brabant where she had been taken, Théroigne was transported to the Tyrol, where she underwent close captivity in the fortress of Kuffstein. From this fortress, the prisoner never ceased to protest her innocence of the crimes of which she was accused, declaring that she was ready to explain her every act since her return from Italy to France, down to the day of her abduction in Belgium.

Either her protestations touched the Emperor Leopold II, or he was actuated by motives of which we are ignorant, but whatever the cause of his decision, he ordered Théroigne to be transferred from the fortress of Kuffstein to Vienna. And when the prisoner was in Vienna, the emperor, brother of that queen whom Théroigne wanted to have assassinated at Versailles on the 5th of October, 1789, granted her a lengthy interview. Stranger still, this interview resulted in the prisoner's release a few days after her conversation with the emperor. Théroigne was conducted back to the Austrian frontier by order of Leopold II, who handsomely defrayed the cost of the journey, for he sent no less a sum than six hundred francs to the Republican to cover her expenses.

If there is a degree of mystery in Théroigne's life, it would seem to lie here. How are we to explain the fact that this woman who had behaved so ill to the sister,

should yet be so well treated by the brother, who was tenderly attached to Marie-Antoinette, unless we admit that Théroigne must have made to the Emperor Leopold "promises that were worth this money and this consideration"? Even if we suppose that Théroigne had made up her mind at the time of giving these promises to break them, we are forced to admit that they would need to be based on some guarantees, otherwise the emperor would not have wasted either his money or his attentions on such an implacable revolutionary and enemy of his relations, as Théroigne.

However this may be, Théroigne de Méricourt returned to Paris in triumph wearing a martyr's halo. She took advantage of the amnesty granted on the 15th of September, 1791, which covered all political offences, to make her entry into the French capital. Fashion made her a real power, the most important revolutionary who commanded the largest audiences in Paris. In all the patriotic cafés, playing-cards in which the queen of spades bore the features of Théroigne de Méricourt were used. At this time the young Republican spoke everywhere and received general applause.

At the league of the "Friends of the Constitution," Théroigne related the story of her sufferings in the cause of liberty. At the "Fraternal League of Minimes" she made an impassioned speech in which she called on women to enter the political arena (the 25th of March, 1792). At the Palais Royal she inveighed against the vendors of caricatures. The masses were carried away by the audacity of her unfettered and picturesque eloquence. Her voice, too, had the very ring of command and of passion.

Théroigne reached the zenith of this life of political excitement and revolutionary fury on the 10th of August, 1792. At this particular time her enthusiasm had risen to frenzy. She wanted, without further delay, to bring about the final fall of the king and his whole family. She was among the foremost of those who led the infuriated

mob. With pistols at her belt, she raged through the Tuileries, stretching Suleau, who attempted to check her in her mad work of carnage, dead at her feet.

The Assembly bestowed on Théroigne a civic crown in recognition of her exploits on the 10th of August, 1792. But this was the last great public honour which she was to receive. Ever since the preceding April dissensions had arisen among the men who had no wish to push matters to extremes, already called Girondists because the greater number of them came from the department of the Gironde, and the violent revolutionists who wished to proceed along the path of terror. Théroigne had at once cast her vote for the Girondists. The extremists never forgave her. When the rupture between the two parties was complete in September, 1792, the violent element, otherwise known as the Mountain (*les Montagnards*), sought to ruin Théroigne by holding her up to ridicule. Collot d'Herbois, one of the best known of the Montagnards at the time, boasted in public of his and Robespierre's good luck in losing the confidence of the brilliant Republican. The more the Gironde lost in prestige, the more Théroigne's popularity waned.

But in spite of the imminent overthrow of the Gironde, the beautiful Girondist sent one more message to the Convention on the 1st of May, 1793. In this message Théroigne tried to warn the Assembly against the Emperor Leopold II's spies, with regard to whose schemes she seems to have been particularly well informed. She suggested also in this same message that the office of "justices of peace and fraternity" should be created and conferred on women.

No attention was paid either to her warnings or to her proposal. The Gironde fell and with it vanished Théroigne de Méricourt's popularity; all unknown to herself she was coming to the great tragedy of her life.

It was in the month of May. The Mountain, wishing to ascertain the numbers who still remained attached to the Girondists, called in the cards of admission issued for the

Convention's meetings. It said that an Assembly nominated by citizens who were all equal should not create inequality by issuing tickets of admission to its meetings which everyone should have the right to attend at will. But the Girondists were kept in the dark concerning this step and, following the general rule in operation down to the 2nd of May, 1793, they continued to distribute cards of admission among their friends. Thus if an inspection of cards were made at the door of the Convention, the Mountain's manœuvre would enable it to discover exactly how many partisans the Gironde still had. This was begun at the end of the first week in May, 1793, and it was carried out by the most repulsive figures of the Revolution, those women, immodest and brazen and ready for any act of violence, who were nicknamed the knitters (*Tricoteuses*). The *Tricoteuses* are met with in all the most hideous acts of the Revolution. They were the instruments of the Terrorists in all the most bloody days and their hand is visible in all the most revolting acts. So it was but natural that the Montagnards should seek their aid to lure the friends of the Girondists into the trap set for them.

On the 15th of May, a considerable detachment of these *Tricoteuses* arrived at nine o'clock in the morning to take up their stand at the doors for the first sittings of the Convention, firmly determined not to admit anyone until they knew whether he had or had not the tell-tale card. At ten o'clock Théroigne appeared on the terrace of the Feuillants, where stood the *Tricoteuses*. They were waiting for her. No sooner did the shrews catch sight of her than she was pounced on with the demand for her card. The young woman, in total ignorance of the plot, hastened to produce it. Instantly the *Tricoteuses* flung the epithet "Brissotine" (from the Girondist, Brissot) at her head, and eight of them seized Théroigne and bore her off as far as the front of the Café Hottot. There, in the presence of a large crowd of drinkers, who were seated on the Café terrace, the vixens turned up the clothes of the

unfortunate girl and beat her with increasing vigour for the space of a quarter of an hour. In vain Théroigne struggled with might and main to escape from these furies. In vain she shrieked aloud for help, the *Tricoteuses* did not leave off until her humiliation was complete and the pain atrocious.

Théroigne was never to recover from this aggressive attack. She certainly did not emerge a mad-woman from the hands of the *Tricoteuses*, in spite of this assertion made by Lamartine, whose poet's imagination led him to outstrip the truth ! But Théroigne was never the same after the tragedy of the 15th of May, 1793.

We see her once more on the following 5th of July, settling with clear brain a very complicated account pending between herself and the Baron de Sélys, but we never see her again in public, and, on the 30th of June, 1794, one of her brothers applied to the civil authorities for a privation order against his sister. This privation order was granted on the 20th of September, 1794. But by that time Théroigne had already been in an asylum for several weeks. She was never to leave it, nor to lead a normal life again.

For twenty-four years the former friend of the Girondists was a raving lunatic, and had only rare moments of lucidity. She died on the 8th or 9th of June, 1817, at the Salpêtrière, aged fifty-five.

In face of this persistent and raving madness, one cannot help wondering if Théroigne would not have lost her reason even apart from the catastrophe on the terrace of the Feuillants. There is no doubt that the life of over-strain and excitement which she had led from her earliest youth upwards did incalculable harm to her mental equilibrium. A prey, during her whole life, to violent emotions, she was always under the menace of brain storms.

But she remains, none the less, one of the most interesting and most curious figures of that troubled period

which comprised the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Possessing an original mind, brilliant, eager to acquire knowledge, Théroigne succeeded, by sheer force of will and intelligence, in giving the impression of a distinguished and cultivated woman. Her very violence and the mistakes of her life are lessened by the sincerity of her convictions and her exertions on behalf of her friends. In 1792 her plan to arm the Parisian women, and in 1793 her project for a magistracy of conciliation, entrusted to an *élite* among the citizenesses, were in advance of the times and denoted an intelligence which pressed forward to the future and realised the importance of the development of feminine personality. The story of Théroigne and her life forms undoubtedly one of the most extraordinary cases in French history ; and the difficulties of her early youth, over which she triumphed so splendidly, cannot but gain for her an indulgence not unmixed with a certain degree of admiration.

THE MYSTERY OF THE CHILD IN THE TEMPLE

Of the various mysteries in history which torment the minds of lovers of truth, none is more painful than that which concerns the fate of the second son [1] of King Louis XVI and of Queen Marie-Antoinette.

This child, who was born at Versailles on the 27th of March, 1785, and baptised in the chapel royal in the castle under the name of Charles Louis, Duc de Normandie, and who was dauphin of France, by the death of his eldest brother, was confined in the prison of the Temple on the 13th of August, 1792, together with his parents, his aunt, Madame Elizabeth, his sister, Madame Royale, the Princesse de Lamballe, and Mesdames de Tourzel. Did he die in that same prison on the 8th of June, 1795, as stated in the official revolutionary documents? Or does this date refer to the death of a boy who was substituted for the prince, and had "Louis XVII" a fate other than that which official history assigns to him?

Many eloquent and disquieting facts have raised this query and have divided the students of history into several groups on the question of Louis XVII. The greater number, while hesitating, have, in spite of everything, returned to the official version.

Many believe, on the contrary, that the royal child left the Temple alive, thanks to the daring and money of the Royalists and later tried to claim his rights. But the advocates of this opinion are faced with more than thirty claimants. Last of all, a work published by Octave

[1] The eldest son of Louis XVI and of Marie-Antoinette was born at Versailles on the 22nd of October, 1781, and died there in his infancy.

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Aubry in 1927 and believed to be no less than "the unpublished memoirs of the Comte de Vaisons, councillor of state and the friend and close collaborator of the Duc Decazes," endeavours to prove that the son of Louis XVI was transported in 1796 to Port-au-Prince, capital of San Domingo, now called Haiti. According to this story Barras, as the result of a machiavellian political plot and encouraged by the future Empress Josephine, herself only obeying her ardent Royalist sentiments, caused little Louis XVII to be removed from the Temple on the 8th of Fructidor, year III (the 25th of August, 1794). After being for some time in the care of a certain Monsieur Petitval, a former diplomat and at that time a wealthy financier, the prince is said to have been landed at San Domingo with the connivance of Barras and Fouché and entrusted to the care of a respectable and attentive widow, Madame de la Toste, who, however, in spite of her affection for the prince, could not prevent the blacks from killing him when the island rose in revolt.

Between these extreme opinions, reason, as well as a logical and systematic study of the facts, interposes another conclusion less romantic, more miserably sad, but bearing the stamp of truth, even if we cannot go so far as to say it establishes it beyond all doubt. The study of the circumstances and facts on which this opinion is based, forms the subject of this chapter.

The little dauphin, who entered the Temple with his parents, shared the king's room until a few days before the beginning of his royal father's trial in January 1793, when the prince was restored to his mother, in whose charge he remained until the 3rd of July, 1793. Then, it having been decided to try Queen Marie-Antoinette, her son was removed and placed with the shoemaker, Simon, and his wife. This couple received particular injunctions to prepare the child to give evidence against his mother, while the most hideous and terrible indictments were to be brought against the queen. The Simons, who up to now had subsisted miserably on what the husband could

make by mending old shoes, received for keeping, watching and corrupting the young prince, a salary of nine thousand francs in addition to board, lodging and washing. But, less than three months after the death of the queen, at the beginning of January 1794, this pair, with no other resources than the splendid salary which they received at the Temple, suddenly threw up this lucrative job without, to all appearance, having anything to replace it. The Simons left the Temple of their own will on the 19th of January, 1794, and these people who possessed nothing, or almost nothing, delayed their departure until nine o'clock at night. This inexplicable resignation and silent departure only become rational in the light of unrecognised causes which we must investigate in order to clear up the mystery.

These proceedings, in any case, were but the prelude to more extraordinary things to follow. The Simons had no regular successors, but the Commune decided to send four of its members every day to watch and guard Capet. These members were to be replaced from day to day. The first four commissaries sent by the Commune arrived at the Temple towards eight o'clock in the evening of the 19th of January, 1794. But the woman Simon did not hand over the royal child to them until nine o'clock when the little lad had already been some time in bed. The commissaries gave Simon a receipt for the child without having him awakened, although this was not strictly regular.

The night passed uneventfully, and behold! in the morning, without having received any orders to this effect, the four commissaries who the night before had had the humanity not to waken the child, suddenly became cruel and tyrannical beyond all words.

They removed the little prince from the room which Louis XVI had occupied in the Temple with his son and which the Duc de Normandie had occupied anew since he had been taken away from the queen, to put him into a small, narrow, dark apartment in which the king's

valet, Cléry, had slept down to the 21st of January, 1793. Not content with the first act of severity, the four commissaries had the prince walled into the kennel where they had just placed him! They even demanded that this outside wall which excluded the light and air should be finished before they left the Temple no matter how heavy the cost to their purse. The door of the room was sealed and locked. No one could see the child except through a grated wicket by means of which food was passed to him.

What are we to think of these cruel precautions taken against a child under nine years old, and by men whose first act had been inspired by kindness and compassion? . . . But this is not the only strange thing in the matter of the child in the Temple.

After the 9th of Thermidor, the régime in all the prisons became less harsh; many of the prisoners were set at liberty, and even in the Temple Madame Royale was treated with much more consideration and care than before the fall of Robespierre. Only in the case of the prince was the régime entirely unchanged! The wall which had been built round his kennel on the 19th of January, 1794, was left untouched; his door remained screwed up and his food continued to be wretched. Why were not both Capet's children treated in the same way?

It might be asked with equal reason why France, exhausted by many years of war, refused to make the peace which she had sought with Spain, Sardinia, and Tuscany, directly she learned that they demanded the restoration of the two children in the Temple as the condition on which they would lay down their arms.

Again, how are we to explain the attitude of the prisoner in the Temple when the deputy of the Meuse, Harmand, was instructed by the Convention to visit the prince and to report on his condition (December, 1794)?

On this occasion the door of the dungeon was unsealed and unscrewed. The place was cleaned and Harmand

entered the chamber of the unhappy boy in order to sit and talk with him. But it was in vain that the deputy asked him question upon question. He received no reply and the child seemed not even to hear them. After the questions, Harmand then proceeded to make him offers. He suggested giving him a companion, offered him dainties, spoke to him of walks in the sun, but this second attempt produced as little response as did direct questions. The prisoner's face remained impassive during the whole interview and the deputy had the strong impression that he was face to face with one deaf and dumb. A child such as this bore little resemblance to the boy who was impatient when Marie-Antoinette and Princess Elizabeth dragged their chair across the floor in the room above his, or who, during his mother's trial, made such detailed and unshakable depositions.[1]

And, lastly, why, when the child became very ill was he not allowed to see his sister ? . . . And what are we to think of the proceedings which accompanied and followed the professional visit of Dr. Desault to the young boy in the Temple ?

The second son of Louis XVI and of Queen Marie-Antoinette was well known to Dr. Desault, because, being a friend of the prince's first doctor, he had replaced him at Versailles during the latter's absence.

The Duc de Normandie had measles at the time and Dr. Desault had attended and cured him. Now, at the beginning of May, 1795, this same doctor was called in to the prisoner in the Temple without anyone knowing that he had previously attended Louis XVI's son. Directly Dr. Desault saw the sick child, he exclaimed " But this is not Capet's son ! " These words were at once reported to the Convention. Dr. Desault was not summoned again to the Temple, and a few days after his visit he received from a group of Conventionists an invitation to dinner, which he accepted. The doctor went to the dinner and a very short time afterwards, on the 1st of

[1] See the chapter on " Marie-Antoinette : Unhappy Queen."

June, 1795, he died, his death being attributed to poison by those who attended him.

The doctors who went to the Temple after the death of Dr. Desault were wholly unacquainted with the prince. They were, moreover, only called in a few days before the child died.

The prisoner died on the 8th of June, 1795, at half-past eleven in the morning without any doctor being present. It was not until the next day, the 9th of June, that the doctors were sent for at three o'clock in the afternoon. It was, perhaps, on account of these circumstances that they were somewhat vague in the certificate which they gave after the post-mortem examination: "We, the undersigned, P. J. Pelletan, P. Lassus, N. Jeanroy, J. R. E. Dumangin, have made a post-mortem examination of the body of a child of about ten years old whom the commissaries have told us is the son of Louis Capet, deceased, and whom two among us recognise as the child that they have been attending for a few days . . ."

In this certificate the doctors state that the child was scrofulous, which was certainly not the case with regard to the son of Louis XVI and of Marie-Antoinette.

Madame Royale did not go into mourning for this prisoner who was officially her brother. She wore green satin tunics and white and yellow dresses. Neither did any European power go into mourning for the child-king, and the brother of Louis XVI, although he caused himself to be called "Louis XVIII," was only recognised as Regent by the foreign powers.

At the Convention speeches which betrayed uneasiness were made. Cambacères remarked in the tribune: "Even though Capet's son has ceased to exist, we shall encounter him everywhere."

At another meeting, Courtois imparted a kind of confidence: "The day will come," he said, "when the papers which are in my possession may be of great use!" But it was not until 1801 that a discovery as pathetic as it was startling, brought to its height the confusion which

reigned in the minds and breasts of those haunted by the question of "Louis XVII."

At that time the Temple was used as a political prison for a group of Royalist prisoners whom Bonaparte considered a danger to his ambitious schemes. At the head of this group was General Comte d'Andigné. Tired of the continuance of idle captivity, the general asked permission for himself and his companions to do some gardening. The permission was granted. But the ground was so dry that nothing would grow. Whereupon the prisoners asked to be allowed to take some alluvial soil from the Temple moats. This request also was granted. So they began to dig vigorously in order to get to the richest, and consequently the most fertilising, layer. One day when they were applying themselves with particular zest to the task, imagine their amazement on bringing to the surface the uncoffined skeleton of a child of about twelve years old, packed in lime which had preserved it!

At once the general and his co-prisoners thought of the son of Louis XVI. He was the only child who, officially, had lived in the Temple. The skeleton answered to the age and height of the prince and the walls of the Temple were too high for the grim parcel to have been thrown from outside into the moat. Besides, the approaches to the Temple were watched day and night by sentinels and guards. But the skeleton was that of a child who had evidently died mysteriously, since it had been buried without a coffin.

Monsieur d'Andigné attempted to interrogate the concierge of the Temple on the painful subject. He not only received no explanations, but, in addition, he gathered that Monsieur Fauconnier was perturbed at being questioned. So the general and his friends came to the sorrowful conclusion that, in spite of the official declarations which stated that Capet's son had been interred in the cemetery of Sainte-Marguerite, little "Louis XVII" had never passed, either alive or dead, through the door of the Temple again after the death

of his mother, and that it was his corpse which had lain in the Temple moat until the day when they had discovered it!

The facts which had come to light in the enclosure of the Temple gradually penetrated to the many people who had always remained in doubt concerning the fate of the former dauphin. They were commented on and discussed, when a fresh incident occurred to renew passing interest in the subject. Simon's widow, whose husband had been guillotined at the time of the Thermidorian reaction, gained admittance to the Home for Incurables in the rue de Sèvres at the beginning of the year 1816. A short time after her admittance she told her ward companions, with a great deal of mystery, that the dauphin was still alive. Soon, growing bolder, she said more. She declared that she had had a share in little Capet's flight, and related the incidents of the event.

The report of these assertions produced such a sensation that they reached the ears of Louis XVIII's government. The brother of Louis XVI was exceedingly upset by this news. He who had dreamed of the throne ever since his eldest brother's accession and who had not scrupled to rouse suspicions in regard to the legitimacy of Marie-Antoinette's children in order to pave the way to the throne, did not intend his power to be shaken by the stories of this old woman. He caused her to be interrogated by two of his officers. Then, one day, the 16th of November, 1816, a carriage was sent for the patient in the Home for Incurables and she was taken to the ministry of police. There, she underwent a lengthy and severe examination by two persons in mufti whom, she declared afterwards, she thought very distinguished. Contrary to all traditions, these two personages did not sign the *procès-verbal*, but they threatened the woman Simon with dire consequences if she continued to talk. At the same time the *procès-verbal* declared her to be "mad" and "a drunkard," while, as a matter of fact,

she was neither the one nor the other, fond of the bottle though her husband had been.

The former guardian of the little prisoner in the Temple was so alarmed by these interrogations that from that time onwards she refused to say anything about her sojourn in the prison. Weeks and months rolled over the head of the old woman, who had grown silent and taciturn, until the state of her health becoming worse caused her to realise that death was near at hand and she asked to receive the last sacraments. When the priest arrived she made a good confession and repented of her sins. Then, after receiving extreme unction, she turned of her own accord to those who stood around her and gathering her strength together, said : " I have nothing more to fear from earthly kings, for I shall soon stand before my judge and my God whom I am about to receive : I declare that what I have said is absolutely true."

People do not make false statements if they are believers, when they know that they are on the point of death, and are still in command of their minds.

All these facts taken together were disquieting and gave much food for reflection. They drove the *curé* of Sainte-Marguerite, Monsieur Hamet, to ask permission of the government in 1846 to have the body of the child who died in the Temple in 1795 exhumed. This permission being granted, the examination took place in the presence of Dr. Millut. The latter made a meticulous examination of the skeleton, and after a lengthy study he declared that it could not be that of a child of less than fifteen years old. This assertion was repeated at the second exhumation of the same skeleton, permission for which was granted on the request of Monsieur Georges Laguerre in 1894.

A long time before these two exhumations, Madame Royale, who had been set at liberty, and had become Duchesse d'Angoulême, had refused to accept the heart

of the child on whom a post-mortem examination had been made in the Temple. This heart, however, had always remained in possession of one of the doctors who had signed the post-mortem certificate and it was impossible for it to have been exchanged for another.

Neither could the former commissary of the Convention, Daumont, persuade the Duc de Grammont, Louis XVIII's minister, to accept, on behalf of the king, a lock of hair which Dr. Pelletan had cut off the head of the child on whom he had made a post-mortem examination at the Temple on the 8th of June, 1795.

" You have been deceived, my friend," said the Duc de Grammont to Daumont, when the latter presented the lock of hair in a lovely box lined with white velvet and decorated with fleurs-de-lys. " This is not the dauphin's hair. He had golden-brown hair ; he has sat too often on my knee for me to be in any doubt about it, and this which you have given to me is red-gold ! "

After weighing and considering at length all these facts, we are forced to come to the conclusion that public opinion was deceived by the official documents relating to the death of young Capet.

The Simons left the Temple on the 19th of January, 1794, because the authorities who had paid them so lavishly for being the gaolers and bringers up of Louis XVI's son since the 3rd of July, 1793, demanded at that particular time, of the husband at least, quite another kind of service, for the execution of which their departure was necessary. But as the service expected from the cobbler came under the category of those which no one would confess to having demanded, it was essential that the first move with regard to this departure should come from him and from no one else. However strange might appear his desire to abandon a life of ease and comfort, with a munificent salary attached, this queer idea was capable of explanation on the grounds of a drunkard's whim. And it was because his employers wanted to create this impression that Simon tendered his resignation

of the post of guardian to little Capet without even telling the true state of affairs to his wife.

It was also because the performance of the deed required of Simon demanded the stillness of night when the activities of the day are hushed in the ease or repose which follow the evening meal that the Simons, who had hardly any possessions, delayed their departure until nine o'clock at night.

And it was because at daybreak the four first commissaries sent by the Commune recognised that the child handed over to them was not Louis XVII, that they determined at all costs to prevent anyone discovering the deception practised on them. Cruelty became essential to their purpose. They knew that the Convention would show neither pity nor forgiveness and that the only punishment it inflicted was death. It was, thus, to save their lives that they confined the prisoner treacherously palmed off on them by the Simons, in a living tomb. Rendered fierce by their instinct of self-preservation, these peaceable citizens were suddenly ready to commit the worst crimes in order to save their heads.

The fact that the child in the Temple was only a child substituted for Louis XVI's son also explains the small care bestowed on him and the wretched food which he continued to receive after the 9th of Thermidor. At the same time it explains why Madame Royale was given no chance of seeing her brother, nor the prisoner of seeing Madame Royale.

The same reason it was which compelled the Government to refuse to make peace with Spain, Sardinia and Tuscany when these countries demanded the restoration of the two children of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette.

Consequently, it is very probable that Harmand did see a deaf mute at the Temple in December 1794; for one can understand that it would be difficult to get any except a mental defective of the lower classes to play the sad part of the young prisoner in the Temple.

Finally, both Dr. Desault and the Duc de Grammont

failed to recognise, the one the face of the dauphin, the other his hair, in the child seen at the Temple in 1795, and later the lock offered by the commissary Daumont to Louis XVIII's minister, because the prisoner who was in the Temple in 1795 was not the Duc de Normandie any more than the boy who was interred in the cemetery of Sainte-Marguerite.

The boy had been released from captivity by murder on the 19th of January, 1794.

By that time his enemies had got out of him all that they wanted, to wit, abominable charges against the queen. Thanks to these accusations, Marie-Antoinette's reputation had been soiled in the point that every woman holds most sacred.[1] Her enemies had gloried in the thought that she was for ever smirched in the eyes of posterity, in feeling that she was distracted by the insults and in telling themselves that they had surrounded her with as much contempt as hatred. But after that deposition against his mother the child was nothing more than a danger to the *sansculottes*, a constant menace to the republic. There were constant Royalist plots for his rescue. Should one of them be successful it was certain that the presence of the prince among his partisans would increase their enthusiasm and energy fivefold, all the more because Louis XVIII was not a sympathetic character.

But it was impossible to bring to trial a child of ten years old. At this age, even the son of the man whom they called "traitor" and of the woman on whom they had heaped calumnies could not be sent to the scaffold. The most violent enemies of the "tyrants" did not venture to propose such a proceeding. It was, thus, imperative to find another means to avert the danger.

Was not Simon the man to do all the distasteful and criminal jobs? If the Committee of Public Safety, for example, or simply one or two influential members of the Commune, were to pay the cobbler an adequate sum to do

[1] See the chapter on "Marie-Antoinette: Unhappy Queen."

away with the dauphin, would he hesitate to assassinate the lad whom he had already depraved and degraded? Indeed, perhaps a few threats would suffice to persuade Simon, for the drunkard had such an ugly past that he had everything to fear from the authorities.

Bribed or frightened, Simon prepared for the crime by tendering his resignation of the post of guardian to the child and by choosing a winter's day for leaving the Temple when the cold and the grey skies would keep everyone snugly indoors.

He made arrangements to delay his departure until nine o'clock in the evening, that is to say, several hours after dark. He told his wife that he was going to save the child. To accomplish this he had only to remove him from the Temple, unseen, and the wealthy Royalists who were near at hand, would give the prisoner's saviour a handsome reward.

So completely did the woman Simon believe what her husband told her that she herself placed and hid the little boy in a large basket of soiled linen, in which Simon presently removed him.

During the day, another child, probably a certain Gombaut, had been introduced into the Temple, hidden in a large wooden horse, a toy that the woman Simon herself had given Capet as a parting gift. It was this child who later occupied Louis XVII's bed and for whom the commissaries accepted a receipt.

By that time Simon had already removed the Duc de Normandie, but not outside the Temple as imagined by the woman Simon. Simon took the child, who was very good and kept perfectly quiet, because he thought he was being borne to liberty, into the Temple garden near to the moat. There the shoemaker had already placed some quicklime and brown paper and while the child still remained quiet and before he had time to understand or be frightened, Simon strangled him with his gnarled and shrivelled fingers, wrapped the body up in the brown paper lined with quicklime, and buried the parcel in

the muddy bed of the moat. There were no cries, no blood, no witnesses : the child-martyr's death remains a mystery.

There are many who still believe that the boy was saved and that it was through fear of his uncle that his friends hid him during the years that followed. Many, and not the least among them, the King of Holland, William II, recognised him in Naundorff, who was interred on his death (the 10th of August, 1854) in the cemetery of Delft with the inscription :

" Here lies Louis XVII, King of France and Navarre (Charles Louis, Duc de Normandie) born at Versailles on the 27th of March, 1785, died at Delft the 10th of August 1845."

Others proclaimed a certain Duke of Richmond as the son of Louis XVI.

Some there are who think that the child saved by the Simons died when it was being conveyed to Spain to a place of safety.

The work published in 1927 makes the dauphin go to Outilles. The Empress Josephine, for example, was convinced that little Louis XVII had been saved and had at any rate survived for a few years. No one was more afraid of his survival than Louis XVIII, which explains his perfectly sincere attitude towards the widow Simon.

But however enticing these theories of survival may be, and however wide the choice of dauphins, more than thirty pretenders having tried to establish their contingent claims, the only hypothesis which is supported by convincing material facts is that of the assassination on the 19th of January, 1794.

The little skeleton which was discovered by General Comte d'Andigné and his companions was in all probability that of the dauphin, for, not only did it correspond in age and height to Louis XVI's son, but in addition, in the light of this solution, everything is clearly explained.

On the other hand, the resolution of the Commune on the 14th of September, 1793, seems to have prepared the

way for this murder in that it provided an opening. The resolution dismissed from the Temple all the servants who had known the royal family before their imprisonment. Their dismissal made possible the substitution of children which would have been impossible with servants who had known the dauphin. The members of the Commune or of the Committee of Public Safety who conceived the crime did not indeed intend to confess to the substitution except in the case of the flight of this false Louis XVII.

It is probable that many boys impersonated the dauphin at the Temple. There may perhaps have been two at a time at any given moment. But the interest of the enigma does not lie herein. What is so grievous and haunting is the thought that this child, the object of so much affection, attention and hope, began by suffering the worst moral degradation and that the many friends who were so passionately devoted to his cause not only failed to succour him, but had not even the consolation of knowing with certainty when and how he died.

LUCILE DESMOULINS AND GABRIELLE DANTON

On the 29th of December, 1790, a big wedding was celebrated in Saint-Sulpice, that imposing and majestic church on the eve of becoming the Temple of Glory.

The son of one of the king's lieutenants in the bailiwick of Guise, Camille Desmoulins, was marrying the blonde and captivating Lucile, daughter of Monsieur Duplessis, chief clerk in the central finance control office. The young couple were surrounded by an immense crowd. All the best and most cultured of the republican world were there: in Camille's own words, the *élite* of the National Assembly. To these were added such of the advanced and liberal thinkers of the older France as happened to be in Paris. This wedding seemed to be a political and prophetic event: the fusion of two ideas in a third, more disinterested and ideal than either. The bridegroom's witnesses were Robespierre, Pétion and Brissot, at that time his dearest and most intimate friends. Happiness, hope, youth and enthusiasm pervaded the ceremony, while bride and bridegroom seemed transfigured by the joy of being united.

Their union was a real victory, for in the beginning Camille Desmoulins alone had desired it against general opposition. Restif de la Bretonne, otherwise extremely unjust to Camille and Lucile, very rightly observed: "Camille fell in love with the little Duplessis girl when she was still no more than a child."[1] Lucile was, indeed, only sixteen when Camille first noticed her.

It was in the Luxembourg gardens, where her mother used to take her every day, beneath the shade of the

[1] *L'Année des Dames Nationales*, by Restif de la Bretonne.

green trees which lent added charm to the meeting, and amongst the marble forms of the great ladies of the past, whose stately gestures imparted something of solemnity to human hopes and desires, that Camille felt for the first time the attraction of this girl whom one divined as gay and yet whose air was one of plaintive reverie. At sight of this pretty, wistful young thing the tribune felt intuitively that her melancholy sprang from an ardent soul, a spirit overburdened by treasures of affection, as yet deprived of outlet. He, nervous, discontented, passionately enamoured of liberty, seeking in the quiet of the Luxembourg gardens to calm the fevered spirit that burnt within him, was refreshed by the sight of the gentle, pure and gracious child, a true creation of Greuze, made to enrich another's life by irradiating it with the charm of her beauty and goodness. Camille Desmoulins fell madly in love with Mademoiselle Duplessis at first sight.

But to gain acceptance of his suit was no easy matter. Lucile's mother, ardent and shrewd, conceived an instant admiration for this young man, alive with intelligence, whose fearless writings dared to attack every abuse. But Monsieur Duplessis, a man of tradition, whose business was with figures, had no use for any calling that was not securely remunerative, and would not hear of a journalist as a son-in-law when Madame Duplessis broached the subject. Moreover, Lucile felt only alarm when Camille first paid her attention. She was afraid of this young man with the dark, flashing eyes and the high thinker's forehead. His outbursts, which were sometimes terrible, frightened her even while leaving the impression that here was something of a high order.

It was the 13th of July, 1789, that first compelled in Lucile's breast admiration and love for Camille Desmoulins. On that day he held the crowd in the hollow of his hand, showed himself so strong a leader of men, attacked with such vehement eloquence the old abuses, that suddenly his name was on everybody's lips and Lucile felt for

him a love and enthusiasm which scattered to the winds all her former fears. From that day onwards the girl had but one desire : to share this hero's life, his hatreds and his passions.

Monsieur Duplessis granted to the entreaties of his daughter what he had refused to the instances of his wife, and the union, on the 29th of December, consecrated the profound, ardent and passionate love of these two hearts which for five months past had beaten as one.

From the day of his marriage Camille had two ruling passions : Lucile and liberty ; to these he devoted his short life and the ardours of his fiery spirit. Thus it was that despite the ever-increasing demands of a political life, he found ways and means to dedicate long hours, gay and full of rapture, to his home and love. On the very day after his marriage he wrote to one of his friends : " My wife's perfect beauty is acclaimed on all sides and I can assure you that it is the least of her merits."

Camille was right. Lucile was an exquisite blonde with large grey eyes, expressive and tender, shaded by long, silky, golden lashes. Her complexion was fresh and delicate like the first June rose. Her red lips, deliciously curved, smiled unconsciously. She was arch and mischievous, but her whole countenance as well as her actions cried aloud her goodness. Her every movement was instinct with grace : it might almost be said that she was grace personified. Her height, hardly above medium, was exactly suited to this pretty blonde, compact of harmony and charm, of youthful bloom and sweetness. But, as her husband wrote, her beauty was the least of her merits, for she possessed a devoted unselfishness of disposition, capable of the loftiest virtues.

The ideally charming life of the young couple began from the winter of their marriage. They knew hours of perfect happiness with no intrusive memories to distract them. This was the time when Lucile wrote to her husband these touching words : " I look for faults

in you, Camille ; I find them and I love them." An intimate poetry pervaded their love.

When spring came the lovers went to disport themselves in the small country-house belonging to the Duplessis at Bourg-la-Reine. A number of friends came to visit them in this pleasant retreat : the conventionist Fréron, whom they loved as a brother and who always arrived elegantly dressed and overflowing with wit ; Brune, the future marshal ; Robespierre, often, but he never shared in the general gaiety. Notwithstanding the cordial friendliness of his hosts, he remained stiff and formal. Danton also sometimes enlivened the party with his boisterous spirits. Many others went to make merry at Bourg-la-Reine. With the exception of Robespierre all the young people were always ready for mirth and play. They romped in the garden like veritable children, led on by Lucile, whose frolicsome liveliness animated the whole group, while even her parents joined in the sport. Nicknames were devised for everyone in order to give a touch of originality to the fun ; at Bourg-la-Reine Camille was called " Bouli-Boula," Lucile, " Rouleau," Madame Duplessis " Melpomene."

Lucile—" Rouleau "—was the life and soul of these parties. She led her friends dancing through the garden full of bees and flowers. Embodiment of the grace of this dying century, she marked the last stage of laughter of that society which marched to its death, with a rose between its lips. But in the midst of their pleasure neither she nor her husband forgot the cause they had at heart. Both were ready to sacrifice everything to it, even that life which had become so sweet to them since their union.

On the 6th of July, 1792, a son was born to them. Camille named him Horace in memory of the Roman patriot, and laid him on his country's altar, wishing to dedicate the child from his birth to France, for whose regeneration Lucile and he were prepared if necessary to sacrifice everything. Maximilien Robespierre, until

such time as he should become the child's friend, stood sponsor at the civil baptism, and danced him up and down to make him laugh. Thus, in this household, domestic and political life went hand in hand.

The 10th of August was one of the days when they intermingled most closely for the Desmoulins.

Camille led the mob which proceeded first to the Tuileries to overthrow the monarchy, and then to the doors of the Assembly to assure its victory by a demonstration, continuing to display its hostile temper at the Royalist club of the Feuillants during the evening, and in the streets of Paris all night through. Lucile, at home, followed, with an extraordinary instinct of divination, all the movements of the mob and the vicissitudes of that terrible day. Kneeling on the window-sill in one of her rooms, her heart beat in unison with the tocsin of the Cordeliers. She knew how many and great were the dangers to which her beloved Camille was exposed ; but in the republican faith which she had imbibed from him she found the courage to master even her love and hold herself ready to suffer all things in order that the convictions of the man she loved so much might triumph ! Doubtless her face was bathed in tears, but they were silent and valiant tears, which brought no weakness in their train, and were her sole concession to all her suffering and fears.

At one o'clock in the morning Camille left the turmoil for a moment to rejoin his Lucile. Exhausted with fatigue, breathless from the efforts of that day, so big with consequences and events, he had no longer the physical strength to consecrate these few moments of liberty entirely to the woman whom he so passionately loved. Hardly had he laid his head on Lucile's shoulder when he fell asleep, and when he awoke it was time to depart. But Lucile had drawn fresh courage from his nearness. Now that she had had him with her for three-quarters of an hour, this valiant soul was strong for two. She was able to comfort and support the

timid and melancholy Gabrielle Danton, who, incapable of bearing alone the apprehensions of this frightful night, had sought shelter with Lucile.

Gabrielle Danton was entirely ignorant of politics. Her husband had revealed to her neither his desires nor his activities, but she had believed in him before he had been noticed by anyone else. She had given him her hand, her fortune and her heart with the complete devotion, profound and dumb, of a timid, simple and ardent nature. That evening she was aware that the great man she adored was leading a formidable insurrection in company with Desmoulins and several of their friends. Broken by the intense suffering and mental anxiety which were so soon to carry her to her grave, she came to seek consolation from the spirited, kind, and loving Lucile Desmoulins. The two republican women mingled their tears. But Lucile found for Gabrielle the words which comfort, those tokens of sympathy which go straight to the heart, the manifestations of a sincere and sustaining friendship.

Yet nothing in Lucile's appearance proclaimed the strong woman. All the friends of the family saw her, as did Fréron, tripping gracefully about, preparing with her own pretty dimpled hands the coffee which Camille took before going to the Assembly, darting about like an adorable elf, showing her pretty white teeth like a kitten, laughing, playing the piano, sometimes falling into day-dreams, and ending her reverie with a big kiss given to her beloved Camille in thought or actuality.

But despite the faithfulness of her portrait as traced by Fréron, despite her kittenish ways, Lucile Desmoulins was gradually building within herself a heart of steel. One day when Brune was counselling prudence to Camille as he shared the household's morning chocolate, Lucile interrupted him with the words: "Leave him alone, he must fulfil his mission. It is he who will save France. Those who think otherwise will have no more of my chocolate."

It was because of this belief that Lucile was glad when, after the fall of the monarchy (August, 1792), her Camille became secretary in the ministry of justice, that she was still more happy to see him enter the Convention as deputy for Paris and vote for the death of King Louis XVI (January, 1793). She enthusiastically approved when her husband prepared the fall of the Girondins by writing his *Histoire des Brissotins*, a work in which his use of irony and ridicule showed greater skill, force, dexterity and rancour than ever before.

But while Camille Desmoulins' popularity increased, the jealousy of the man whom he and Lucile had always treated as their best friend, who at the lycée Louis le Grand had been his favourite schoolfellow, whom on the 29th December, 1790, he had chosen as best man at his marriage and had later made civil god-father to his beloved son, who for long had been a daily guest at the Desmoulins' table—Maximilien Robespierre—grew daily more acute.

Robespierre had risen higher and more rapidly than Camille : after attaining membership of the Committee of Public Safety in August, 1793, he had been elected president of the Convention on the 21st of the same month. But he was not content with this. His ambition would not tolerate that any of those below him should rise above their fellows. The higher he rose the more carefully he looked out for any obstacles and enemies whom he might have reason to fear ; for he desired to gather into his own hands all the reins of power in order to be the real and absolute master of France and leave to others only the semblance of authority. It was this desire to be the undisputed master, omnipotent and blindly obeyed, that caused Robespierre to mark down every man of worth and intelligence as a personal menace to be incontinently done away with. In order to combat and annihilate these dangers, Robespierre created a new weapon of defence. He reorganised the Revolutionary Tribunal, turning it into a docile instrument which in

obedience to his will and with the required rapidity would sentence those whose overthrow was necessary to his ambition. One of the first victims of his jealousy was Camille Desmoulins.

Camille, the popular author of the *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, one of the organisers of the 10th of August, 1792, which resulted in the foundation of the Republic, the passionate and vehement journalist whose redoubtable irony was all-powerful ; the applauded and influential member of the Cordeliers club, might well become a successful rival or be an obstacle in the path of Robespierre's ascent : it was essential that he should disappear without delay.

Ever since the end of 1793 Camille, in concert with Danton, had in his paper *Le Vieux Cordelier* attacked with poignant irony the bloody rule of the Terror. When the revolutionary storm was at its height he had acquiesced in and even extolled violent measures, but only as a painful and entirely temporary necessity. Now that the Republic was established he rejected them as inhuman and unworthy of a civilized people. Robespierre seized upon this fact to denounce Camille Desmoulins, Danton and their friends as enemies of the Republic and defenders of the old régime. Camille, at the request of Robespierre, was expelled from the Jacobins' club and shortly afterwards, on the night of the 30th–31st of March, 1794, arrested, together with Danton and their partisans, and thrown into prison under pretext of having fomented the plot of the *Indulgents*.

Before making his attack on the *Indulgents*, Robespierre had already sacrificed the group of *Corrompus* and the *Enragés* or *Exagérés*. Hébert and his friends had also mounted the guillotine for having attacked *Les Ambitieux Insatiables*.

But the batch which comprised men of eminence like Desmoulins and Danton, both of whom had achieved so much in the cause of liberty and the Republic, did not fail to inspire Robespierre with a feeling of uneasiness.

He feared that the Convention would protest against their arrest. So "The Incorruptible" did not mention his project to the Assembly until the victims were already in prison. He precipitated the matter in order that the Convention should have no time to criticise it, conducted the whole case himself, and so that the condemned might not arouse public indignation by revealing the iniquity of the arrests, the sentence was pronounced in their absence.

Camille, however, was less indignant with Robespierre than sorrowful for his beloved Lucile. As soon as he was confined in the Luxembourg he tried to communicate with her. He wept over her. He extolled in passionate words of love and admiration, the beauty, charm and goodness which were his beloved's. She, poor wounded soul, hung round the prison where she knew her adored Camille lay, trying to get a glimpse of him, to talk to him, to look once more with admiration into those eyes which she now loved so much and which had once filled her with alarm. As the bird flutters around its threatened nest, so Lucile walked backwards and forwards by the dungeons, one of which enclosed her Camille. If she could but press close to him once more, let her heart beat on his, tell him that she will count it happiness to follow him even to death, what immense consolation she would feel! . . . Hour after hour the brave little Republican nursed the hope that with perseverance she would succeed in gaining access to Camille. That is why night overtook her at the Luxembourg, and why she spoke to everyone who seemed sympathetic, for from each she hoped to glean some intelligence.

Robespierre neither could nor would understand an attitude that only the intelligence of the heart could explain. If Lucile Desmoulins lingered so late at the Luxembourg, if she spoke to so many people and if she showed agitation and emotion, it was because she was plotting to save her husband and to attack the Republic in concert with the Royalists under the leadership of

General Comte de Dillon. Camille Desmoulins had defended this general the year before against a charge of treason. In Robespierre's eyes there was nothing more natural than that Camille's wife should turn to him for her plotting and that they should have conspired together.

So, while Camille, at the foot of the guillotine a few moments before his death, once more apostrophised, in a transport of passion and love, the wife for whom he mourned so deeply: "Lucile, my Lucile, my darling Lucile, my bound hands still embrace you and my severed head still rests upon you its passionately love-stricken eyes," she had already been accused and thrown into prison on the 16th of Germinal, 1794 (the 5th of April, 1794).

During the whole of her trial Lucile displayed an astonishing calmness. She seemed to look into the other world, to smile already at her husband whom she was so anxious to rejoin. Resolute, intrepid and yet touching in the freshness of her youth and emotion, many of her very judges found her disturbing. When she heard her death-sentence, the fond young wife flung back her head and cried aloud:

"O joy! In a few hours I shall see my Camille again!"

To go to her death Lucile arrayed herself as on the day of her betrothal, then draped about her head and shoulders a white fichu which lent to her roguish child's face a touch of gracious originality in keeping with the sweetness of her glance. But before she left for the scaffold she desired to write a last farewell to her mother: "Good-night, mother dear," she wrote, "the tear that falls from my eyes is for you. I shall fall asleep in the calmness of innocence."

When she had finished her letter Lucile awaited, calm and serene, the approach of the fatal tumbrel. She climbed in when ordered to do so without fear or hesitation, and as it conveyed her through the streets of Paris the face of the widow of twenty-two on her way to

execution seemed to the onlookers to shine with a reflected happiness. (12th of April, 1794.)

General Comte de Dillon was beheaded in his turn on the 14th of April, 1794.

Very touching also is the story of Gabrielle Danton. Her greatness lies in her qualities of sweetness and self-abnegation, wifely devotion and clear-sighted instinct. Born in Paris towards the middle of the year 1762, in the heart of the Latin quarter, her maiden name was Antoinette Gabrielle Charpentier. She received only a very mediocre education, her father, Monsieur Charpentier, who was both a *contrôleur des fermes* and the proprietor of a café, patronised by the young men from the schools, thinking, like Chrysale, that : " A woman is always learned enough when her wits are equal to distinguishing between a doublet and a pair of breeches." So Gabrielle learnt to read, write, mend, manage a house, help her mother to keep the accounts of the *Café de l'Ecole*, and that was all. She never read Plutarch or Rousseau like Madame Roland, nor held intercourse with philosophers and historians as did Charlotte Corday. But this meagre education did not prevent her from realising that there were better things in life than the tranquillity of the morrow, the pleasures of an appetising and abundant table, and a comfortable home.

Although she was entirely ignorant of France's political difficulties, she very early took a lively interest in the heated, enthusiastic and persuasive discussions of one of the young *avocats* who frequented the *Café de l'Ecole*. This *avocat* was not good-looking. He had had his lip torn in childhood when attempting to defend the cow, whose milk had nourished him, from a bull. Moreover, his face had been ravaged by small-pox and in his frequent outbursts his athletic figure became alarming. In a word, he already manifested that " powerful ugliness " which either terrified or fascinated.

It fascinated Gabrielle Charpentier. Her clear-sighted instinct enabled her at once to divine a great spirit in

this young man and to discover, unlike Monsieur Louis Madelin, that this *avocat*, whose name was Danton, had also a great heart. His disquieting exterior attracted instead of frightening her.

Each time Danton spoke at the *Café de l'Ecole* he had behind the till a convinced and devoted listener who, even though she did not understand what the orator was expounding, was nevertheless certain that everything he said was just and right. This listener wished with all the strength of her timid, but profoundly ardent nature, that everyone might be subjugated as she was herself by the vehemence of the man of law.

Thus between Danton and the proprietor's daughter of the *Café de l'Ecole* there grew up a very warm sympathy. This well-to-do girl, brought up in a selfish, middle-class circle, had henceforth but one desire: to attach herself to this young man of genius as yet unknown to the world, to offer her devotion to sustain him, her money to assist him, to become his loving, obedient and submissive wife, asking nothing in return except a little love, since her scanty education prevented her from ever rising to be his intellectual companion.

Such a project naturally met with very lively opposition from Monsieur and Madame Charpentier, who had planned for their daughter a rich husband in an assured position. Danton, the reformer, who had won Gabrielle's heart, was the very man to alarm her parents and stiffen them in their refusal to accept him as a son-in-law. But Gabrielle's firmness overcame their resistance in the end, and they consented to the marriage with the single stipulation that in order to have a settled and permanent profession Danton should purchase the post *avocat au conseil du roi*. Danton accepted the condition and the marriage took place on the 9th of June, 1787, Danton being then twenty-eight and his wife twenty-five.

It may be said that the only peaceful hours in this grim man's stormy life were spent by the side of his gentle and devoted wife. As for her, from the day of

her marriage her life was made up of stresses which became every day more painful and acute. Madame Danton had blind faith in her husband : she was determined not to hinder or embarrass him in his work. She was proud that love of country and justice should be first in his heart. But since she loved him as ardently as she admired him she foresaw from the early years of the Revolution the dangers with which he was menaced. She realised that Danton, franker and more reckless than became an astute politician, multiplied his troubles by the freedom of his speech. This knowledge caused her intense suffering. But she hid her pain from her husband for fear of weakening him and because she felt herself incapable of giving him advice. So little, indeed, did Madame Danton understand the end towards which he was working that she endeavoured to help the cause of progress which he pursued by redoubling her prayers !

Thus there was no real intimacy between the two. Gabrielle was perfectly well aware of this, and suffered deeply, as she suffered also from torturing fears born of her husband's position and audacity and from the silence in which she must endure them. This is why all her contemporaries picture her as grave and melancholy, very beautiful, but with a calm and stately beauty animated neither by play of glance nor expression. Her face was a pretty oval, but her complexion was pale ; and her eyes, of a grey which verged on green, were half-closed. The lips of her perfectly-shaped mouth never parted in a happy smile. Her beautiful chestnut hair was austerely dressed. Her pose, too, was austere, as were also her bearing and gestures. Altogether her appearance was a little calculated to frighten happiness away.

Nevertheless Gabrielle knew two great happinesses in her married life—the birth of her two sons. It has been said that the elder was the result of the joy felt by Danton at the storming of the Bastille (the 14th of July, 1789) and the second of his rejoicing at the death of Mirabeau

(the 2nd of April, 1791) which left to the future Montagnard the leadership of the country.

But to a woman like Gabrielle Danton what a price did days and nights such as those of the 10th of August, 1792, put upon her happiness! On the morning of the 10th of August, having uttered no word of complaint, she fell fainting into the arms of Lucile Desmoulins, utterly overcome and exhausted by the emotion of the night. True, on the following day, the 11th of August, she had the honour and joy of seeing her husband elected minister of justice, before he had even been made a deputy. His first words on attaining to power, the first words spoken by the new minister from the rostrum of the Assembly were: "Where the work of justice begins, popular vengeance must end."

Danton at once set to work to establish an inexorable but regular justice. In order to attain this object, he created, on the 17th of August, 1792, the tribunal extraordinary. This tribunal with which Danton has been bitterly reproached and which, it is true, led to many excesses, was, however, created in a spirit of justice and order. It is, therefore, untrue to assert, as several historians have done, that it was the establishment of this tribunal and the haunting memory of the massacres of September, 1792, which killed Madame Danton. Besides, these massacres were not ordered by Danton; he tolerated them, and to prevent them was probably beyond his power. Madame Danton never accused her husband of these massacres, and as to the creation of a tribunal extraordinary she always considered it a right measure.

No, if Madame Danton left the ministry of justice a dying woman, it was not because she thought her husband's conduct deserving of criticism. Moreover, the only document which has openly accused Danton of the September massacres is a Girondin and consequently hostile work, rather a pamphlet than an historical record. Madame Danton was killed by her over-respon-

sive and super-sensitive spirit, confined in a frail and delicate body. She was unable to bear the terrible trials and emotions of that titanic epoch. Her love was too ardent for her strength, her determination to bear all her sufferings in silence was too cruel an imposition for her feeble physical resistance. And then in the last months of her life a new sorrow was superadded to the troubles of the past. She divined that her husband whom she loved every day more passionately, no longer felt anything more for her than a profound tenderness, mingled with intense admiration for her merits, but that this veneration had in it nothing of love. Danton's amorous passion had strayed far from home.

The sick woman sought out who might be the ravisher of a love which was dearer to her than all else in the world. She quickly discovered that the chosen one was unaware of her conquest and that Danton's love was unrequited. She who had unwittingly stolen his heart was a girl of sixteen, full of charm, as pure as she was pretty and artless, one Mademoiselle Louise Gely.

Then this noble wife, a-quiver with love, her heart shattered with vain regrets, arranged with her last strength the marriage of the husband whom she adored with the object of his affections. Desiring to be as generous and unselfish after death as she had been ever since she had first known Danton, she made him promise to marry Mademoiselle Gely with the briefest possible delay after her own demise. She pretended that she would die happier for the thought that her two dear little sons would soon have another mother to take her place.

This great sacrifice was not the last imposed on Gabrielle Danton. At the end of January, 1793, the Convention sent her husband on a mission to Belgium just when she felt that she had only a very few days longer to live. But she hid her condition from her husband in order not to hamper or agitate him. She died far from him in their house in the Passage du Commerce on the 10th of February, 1793, without being able to let her eyes rest

for the last time, before they closed for ever, on the man whom she had been the first to discover, for whom she had suffered so much, had offered up so many prayers and whom she had loved with a very extravagance of self-sacrifice.

She died at the age of thirty-one, taking with her the best of Danton's life. She had been his good fortune ; his lucky star, his faith, his strength, his devoted comforter.

At the news of his wife's death, Danton, distraught with grief, rushed back to Paris. But when he arrived at the Passage du Commerce, Gabrielle had already been dead for a week and in her grave four days. Deaf to everything but his passionate grief, nothing would satisfy him but to look on her once more, to snatch her from the grave, to press her for the last time in his arms. He caused her body to be exhumed and in spite of the enveloping grave-clothes, strained her to his heart and rained frantic kisses upon her.

But four months later, on the 17th of June, 1793, Gabrielle's former husband married Louise Gely. Danton thought he was only obedient to the dead, whereas he trembled with passion at the approach of his girl-wife. She, however, was afraid of Danton's ugliness, lit up by bursts of lightning. She merely acquiesced in his love for her. This was no longer the heroic love of Gabrielle Charpentier. Everything was changed, moreover, in the comfortable flat in the Passage du Commerce ; troublous times had set in, and scarcely a year after his second marriage Danton, by order of Maximilien Robespierre, laid his head upon the guillotine (the 5th of April, 1794).

TWO ACTIVE REPUBLICANS

OLYMPE DE GOUGES AND CLAIRE LACOMBE (KNOWN AS "ROSE LACOMBE")

In a police report submitted by an officer called Dutard to the minister Garat, on the 1st of June, 1783, the writer concludes his summary remarks with the assertion: "The revolutionary women who wear the cockade are all as ugly as sin." In order to formulate such a verdict Dutard must either have been dogged by a persistent ill-luck which denied him the sight of pretty revolutionaries, or else actuated by a prejudice all the more reprehensible because his statement bore an official character.

No, all the revolutionary women who wore the cockade were not ugly, far from it! Without dwelling on the captivating grace and lovely countenance of Lucile Desmoulins; Théroigne de Méricourt's renowned and triumphant beauty; Charlotte Corday's noble air and proud, impressive features; the bright, dark eyes, a-sparkle with wit, and the sculptured limbs of Thérèsia Cabarrus, apart from all these, the names of two revolutionary republicans, the pioneers of the emancipation of women, suffice to give the lie to Dutard's statement.

The elder of these two women, whose revolutionary activity was only equalled by the radiance of their beauty, was Olympe de Gouges, a southerner alike in sentiments, appearance and ambitions. Olympe was born at Montauban in somewhat mysterious circumstances. Both the date of her birth and her father's name are uncertain. All, or almost all, the historical dictionaries give the former as 1755, but her date of baptism is entered in the church register as the 7th of May, 1745!

This disparity of ten years between the two sources

of information must be due to the fact that the dictionaries have accepted as true the date which Olympe herself gave to her judges. But would not a pretty woman, even on the eve of being guillotined, hate to own that she had passed her fortieth year? . . . A country exists where, in order to spare women witnesses a perjury, the law does not require them to take the oath until after they have stated their age. It would not even occur to Olympe de Gouges that she was lying when she declared her age to the judges as thirty-eight instead of admitting to her full forty-eight years, and there is no doubt that May, 1745, is her real date of birth.

Her mother was a lovely wardrobe-dealer of Montauban. It is more difficult to name her father. Many have declared him to be Louis XV himself, but this statement appears to be without foundation, and it seems, on the contrary, probable that Olympe was the child of Le Franc de Pompignan, a native of Montauban like the pretty wardrobe-dealer, an admirer of the fair sex and known to have been the lady's lover.

Olympe left the provinces at the age of eighteen; but her beautiful and expressive dark eyes, wealth of dusky hair, provocative and fascinating personality, her warm brunette's complexion, and natural elegance had already been remarked in Montauban, where she was generally known as "La belle Montalbanaise."

In Paris her beauty soon turned the head of a wealthy citizen well on in years, Monsieur Aubry, who humbly implored her to become his wife. Olympe consented, and a year after her marriage gave birth to a splendid boy. Some writers assert that she was then already a widow. Others, on the contrary, maintain that it was not until much later that she lost her husband and that she herself spread the legend of widowhood so that she might be free to divide her time between poetry and love. She threw herself with ardour into both and wrote prolifically, impelled in all probability by an inherited instinct, but without ever attaining to simple and correct

expression. At that time she wrote chiefly plays: *Zanon et Myrza,* which was produced at the Comédie Française under the name of *L'Esclavage des nègres* or *L'Heureux naufrage,* a play profoundly imbued with humanitarian sentiments; *Lucende et Cardena,* quite as badly written as the foregoing, the *Mariage de Cherubin,* and *L'Homme généreux,* works in which the author continues to employ alike her missionary zeal and her consistently deplorable style.

Olympe was more successful in love than in literature. She was accustomed to being so much admired that Fleury has written in his memoir: "Olympe de Gouges would have an attack of vapours if, when in society, she was not at once surrounded by an admiring crowd of lovers, authors and academicians. She wanted to have them entirely to herself, much as a king commands his bodyguard."

Her enemies paid homage to her beauty even while attacking her. Duveyrier, in a famous epigram against her, begins with these words: "Heaven made you to be naught but fair." Restif de la Bretonne, while overwhelming her and her works with abuse in *L'Année des dames nationales,* 1794, adds that never was there a prettier woman. So proud was Olympe of this beauty and alleged talent that she displayed a foolish and intolerable vanity. Her pride even ended by turning her head, for it gave birth to that frenzy of persecution which has led certain historians to assert that she was insane.

In reality, this hot-headed southerner was merely guilty of extravagance, judging her merits by the intensity of her native sunlight. Like Alphonse Daudet's Tartarin, she arrogated to herself a renown and merit existent only in her own inflamed imagination. But this mirage-led victim had a generous nature, a real love for the humble, and a passion for justice and the public weal. Her missionary soul burned with indignation at the sight of suffering and the inequality of the sexes. She was the first to declare that men and women have equal

rights, and to institute women's assemblies where they might be taught to defend themselves and fight for their rights.

From 1790 Olympe was in the thick of the political and feminist battle, and in those stormy days relied for support on the most violent women of the Revolution: those furies, drawn from the lower classes, who on the 5th and 6th of October, 1789, began their hideous work by marching, insults on lip and arms in hand, to Versailles, there to bid the royal family return with them to Paris. These women on every day of insurrection and murder spurred men on to slaughter and revenge. It was they who inspired and even dictated *La Grande Motion des Citoyennes des divers Marchés*, published by the printing press of the citizenesses of the Marché Saint-Jean, a resolution consisting of a series of hate-inspired appeals designed to bring about the assassination of those who failed to share their sanguinary tastes and horror of all that existed before 1789. For these women and with their collaboration Olympe de Gouges, possessing, nevertheless, none of their vindictiveness, brutality or appetites, founded the club of the knitters, the *Tricoteuses*.

It was at the meetings of this club that Olympe, an active Republican, conceived the majority of the pamphlets and social tracts issued after the publication of her Oriental story, *Le Prince philosophe*, a novel in which she had set forth her theory of women's rights. Among the tracts written by this revolutionary none gained so much publicity, badly written though it was, as *Les Trois Urnes*, addressed to the handsome Montagnard, Hérault de Sechelles: "You," she wrote, "who would be my hero if I were merely a woman, for physical attraction adds much to talent and virtue."

The manner of this avowal leads us to suppose that in denying her love for Hérault de Sechelles, Olympe sacrificed herself to what she considered her duty as a patriot and politician. May we not, in the light of this interpretation, believe that in allying herself to the

Tricoteuses, so profoundly unlike her, but so numerous, she was making a similar sacrifice in order that her cause, which was that of all women, might triumph? But this alliance with all that was most vile and bloody in the Revolution prevented her from ever knowing the great popularity enjoyed, for example, by Théroigne de Méricourt, or Thérèsia Cabarrus at Bordeaux and after Thermidor.

Olympe fought for women's rights with doggedness and perseverance. Her ideas, besides being novel, were broad and audacious. She dared to wage open warfare against the advanced revolutionaries who were the greatest enemies of the emancipation of women and who proposed to eject them from public life as soon as they were no longer needed to stir the eddies of the great revolutionary days. But despite her hard work, unremitting efforts and new ideas for uplifting the down-trodden sex, she never, in her lifetime, enjoyed great ovations or sweeping triumphs. It was left to posterity to acclaim her the precursor of the feminist movement and the pioneer of women's just demands. In order to assure ourselves of the justice of Olympe's claim to this dual title it is sufficient to re-read *La Déclaration des droits de la Femme et de la Citoyenne*, drawn up by our pioneer in September, 1791. The style of this work is awkward and full of faults, heavy and involved and sometimes obscure; but the ideas are clearly outlined, with firmness and authority.

On women's right, for example, to all the same occupations and dignities as men, Article 6 lays down that:

"All citizens and citizenesses should be equally eligible for all honours, positions and public employments according to their abilities and without other distinction than their virtues and talents."

Article 10 proclaims the right of women to take part in public life in terms even more downright and forceful than the above. But let us quote the very words:

"Women have the right to mount the scaffold; they should likewise have the right to mount the rostrum."

In Article 11 the *Déclaration* of 1791, under pretext of humanity, arrives at an assertion which fortunately even to-day very few would care to endorse :

" Inquire into paternity," says this article, " and let neither unmarried mothers nor widows who have been made mothers be made henceforth to blush by reason of a barbarous prejudice. . . . Marriage is the grave of trust and love. . . . The contracting parties in the social contract between man and woman when pooling their possessions expressly declare that they reserve to themselves the right to separate this property in favour of their children or of those whom they might have by a particular inclination."

All the articles of this *Déclaration* lead on in the same way from one affirmation to another, each one bolder and more unaccustomed than the last, and resulting in conclusions which even to-day alarm and disconcert us.

Olympe de Gouges also demanded that a tribunal of conciliation should be entrusted to an *élite* among the citizenesses.

Her efforts were vain. Not only were the beautiful southerner's demands unheeded, but the Convention, true to its violent anti-feminist tendencies, suppressed, on the 30th of October, 1793, all the popular women's societies and clubs and prohibited women from taking any part in political life. Even Olympe's son, Pierre Aubry, who, after having been an engineer, became an officer, disowned his mother in a profession of civic faith, monstrous in its cowardice and meanness.

Finally, Olympe herself abandoned the feminist cause and the *Tricoteuses* when the Assembly put King Louis XVI on his trial. This decision caused her more sorrow than all her failures put together. She attacked Robespierre violently and laid the blame on him. She even suggested later that they should drown themselves together, in order that he might expiate his wicked deed ; while she herself could find consolation for the death of the king only in annihilation. She finally

succeeded in exasperating the Montagnards, who ordered her arrest in October, 1793.

In prison, Olympe preserved her serenity and composure. She saw the day of her trial dawn without apprehension, and even before the scaffold her fortitude did not desert her. Mounting the steps of the bloody machine with dignity, she gazed fixedly at the people and said:

"Children of the Fatherland, you will avenge my death." "Long live the Republic!" responded the crowd, and the head of this courageous woman fell beneath the knife of the guillotine. It was the 3rd of November, 1793, and at four o'clock in the afternoon Olympe de Gouges had ceased to be.

The younger of the two active republicans who form the subject of this essay was born at Pamiers, a town now belonging to the department of Ariège, on the 4th of March, 1765, so that she too was a southerner. Her name was Claire Lacombe, although she was called Rose Lacombe among her friends, in the revolutionary papers and the places which she frequented. Like Olympe de Gouges, Claire Lacombe was remarkably pretty and she too, was a beauty of the southern type. As in the case of the older woman, she had a childhood the history of which is unknown to us; she is already eighteen when we first discover her as an actress in the south of France. But there does not appear to have been anything striking about her art for she was only given minor parts. It was her beauty much more than her talent which interested the managers. So Claire must have lived and gone about her business without attracting any particular attention up to the outbreak of the Revolution.

At the opening of the States-General, the young actress, then aged twenty-four, seems to have been more in the public eye than formerly. We find mention of her beauty, the parts which she interpreted and the charm with which she invested them. Nevertheless, her suc-

cesses and the money which she made out of them, did not last long, for she went to Paris in the spring of 1792 because she was out of work. It should be noted that until then she had remained in the south and that it is therefore inaccurate to make her play a part in the events of October the 5th and 6th, 1789, when certain papers represent her as very active, dressed in her man's garb which became her so well that certain pretty girls were quite deceived by it.

Claire Lacombe's first patriotic demonstration outside her native south took place on the 25th of July, 1792, and it was at the very bar of the Legislative Assembly that she read a petition asking to be allowed to serve her country exactly as though she were a man. "A Frenchwoman and an artist out of work, that is what I am!" she said. "Legislators, what should be my despair engenders in my heart the purest joy. Unable to come to the help of my country, which you have declared to be in danger, by monetary sacrifices, I am come to pay it homage with my person. Born with the courage of a Roman and the hatred of tyrants, I should hold myself fortunate to aid in their destruction. May every despot perish! Intriguers, base slaves of our Neros and Caligulas, would that I could annihilate you all! And you, mothers, whom I should blame were you to leave your children in order to follow my example, while I do my duty in fighting our country's enemies, do you do yours by teaching your children what every Frenchman should possess from birth: the love of liberty and the horror of despotism. Never lose sight of the fact that without the virtues of Veturia Rome would have lacked the great Coriolanus!"

No doubt the tone and style of this petition, as well as the strange offer made by Claire Lacombe to the Legislative Assembly, would appear to us ridiculous and nonsensical. But at that time of exalted sentiments, of constant menace of a tragic death, of general upheaval, words and actions were transformed like the hearts which

gave them birth. It was as natural to be sublime, tragic or grotesque during the Revolution as to be elegant and distinguished in the period which preced it. Claire Lacombe, declaiming her petition to the Assembly on the 25th of July, 1792, and desiring to serve her country as a soldier so long as France should need defenders, provoked neither smiles nor astonishment. Her proposal and attitude were in harmony with the spirit of the times.

The sisters Fernig were soldiers such as Claire desired to be ; gunner Catherine Pochelat was known and admired as was also gunner-citizeness Duliere, and Lazarre Carnot, who, like everyone else, was unaware that Mademoiselle d'Eon was a man, supported the request of this self-styled woman to regain her former rank in the army as a captain of dragoons and raise a regiment. From 1790 onwards several French provinces possessed battalions of armed women. There was, for example, the battalion of women of the Vosges, that of the ladies of Maubec (in the present département de l'Isère), the battalion of Vauvert (a town in what is now the Gard), of Vic-en-Bigorre at the foot of the Pyrenees, of Creil, and many others which sprang up in every part of the country.

True, none of these women served by virtue of a decision either of the Legislative Assembly or of the Convention. The movement originated at the same time as the other revolutionary movements and the *fait accompli* had become established and widespread in its effects before it occurred to anyone to combat it. Not until the 30th of April, 1793, did the Convention issue a decree banishing all women except laundresses and *vivandières* from cantonments and camps. Thus Claire Lacombe, when she offered in July, 1792, to serve her country as a soldier, was in precisely that frame of mind admired and encouraged by her compatriots.

In spite of everything, however, Claire never became a soldier, but her popularity in Paris increased day by day. She soon acquired a considerable influence in the

clubs, amongst men as well as women. A regular staff, composed of representatives of both sexes, gathered round her and escorted her in her numerous patriotic demonstrations. She displayed such activity and hatred against the royal family on the 10th of August, 1792, that she received a civic crown as a reward for her courage and initiative on that day, so big with consequences.

But Claire's sympathies were not with the Montagnards : like the majority of the revolutionary women, even the most uncompromising, she was on her guard against men who did not conceal their thirst for blood, whose brutal eloquence palliated nothing, many of whom had become wealthy in the provinces, while others led there the lives of potentates. Like Charlotte Corday, Madame Roland and Théroigne de Méricourt, to cite only a few of the most famous enemies of the Mountain, the actress from the Ariège considered this party dangerous, ambitious and filled with cupidity. She was haunted by words such as those of citizen Roussillon at the inauguration of the obelisk erected in honour of the murdered Montagnard : " It is not laurels that Marat asks of us, but blood." Her convictions brought her closer and closer to the *Société des Républicaines Révolutionnaires*, which was under the influence of a group of outsiders, the *Enragés*, led by Leclerc, a bitter enemy of the Mountain.

Claire Lacombe became president of this society, although she had founded the *Société fraternelle des Amazones Révolutionnaires*. Leclerc found in the new president one who vied with him in antipathy to the Montagnards. Between them, supported by their followers in the *Société des Républicaines Révolutionnaires*, as well as by many other friends in the various Paris clubs or elsewhere, they led a campaign of violent attacks against Robespierre's party. These at first gained them a few victories over the Mountain. But Claire's petition, which she carried to the bar of the Convention on the 7th of October, 1793, was the last audacity she dared to commit against the enemies of the Girondins. This piece of

daring enabled the *Société des Républicaines Révolutionnaires* to win an important victory over the Mountain on the following 25th of October, but the Montagnards in the Convention had their revenge by stirring up against the *Révolutionnaires Républicaines* the *Poissardes* and the *Tricoteuses*. On the 28thof October these latter bedecking themselves in Phrygian caps and trousers, their belts loaded with pistols, rushed into the streets to stir up the passers-by against all who were not with the Mountain. They subjected *Enragés*, *Républicaines Révolutionnaires* and *Amazones Révolutionnaires* to insult and slaughter, and forced them to flee before them.

Claire Lacombe was pursued by the Ladies of the Market and by the *Tricoteuses* with greater ferocity than anyone else. Had she not called Maximilien Robespierre a coward and said that it was his cowardice which prevented him from ever going on a mission to the provinces ? She declared that he had paled when she spoke at the bar of the Convention, and that fear was written in every line of his face.

Nevertheless, Claire escaped from the *Poissardes* and the *Tricoteuses* and continued to carry on propaganda against the Mountain, until the following 3rd of April (the 4th of Germinal, year II). Curiously enough, on that very day, Claire Lacombe, Leclerc, the leader of the *Enragés*, and Pauline Leclerc, his wife, were all three arrested, although they were neither together nor acting in concert at the time.

Claire was incarcerated that same evening in Sainte-Pélagie, the women's prison, but was soon transferred to Port-Libre, the prison of the *Muscadins*, then to the Luxembourg, where love and elegance were no less in fashion than at Port-Libre. We do not know why she was sent later to Plessis, only to be sent back again some months later to her original prison of Sainte-Pélagie.

Altogether, Claire Lacombe spent seventeen months in prison, and recovered her liberty on the 3rd of Fructidor (the 21st of August, 1794). She owed it to the 9th of

Thermidor. If Robespierre had remained master, the Incorruptible would never have forgiven her the evil which she thought of him. He might have continued to let her languish forgotten in prison as he had done for sixteen months; he would never have allowed her to come out. Robespierre's rancours and hatreds were insatiable. But the leader of the Terror helped unwittingly to make his enemy's name famous. Had Claire Lacombe desired only to serve her country as a soldier, had her attacks against the Mountain, and in particular against Robespierre, not drawn attention to her and her imprisonment, her name would perhaps have remained unknown not only to posterity, but to many of her contemporaries also.

When she ceased to be confronted by her terrible enemies, no one troubled about her any more. She was so completely forgotten that we do not know how she ended her days. Did she return to the stage? Did she marry a rich bourgeois? Did she die peacefully in an odour of sanctity? All these answers are possible, but none is certain.

Claire Lacombe was a very active revolutionary, an energetic anti-Montagnard, a pretty woman whose beauty was unimpaired by imprisonment; this is all that we know of her. After coming out of prison she returned once more to the obscurity which enshrouded her childhood's days.

MADAME ELIZABETH, SISTER OF LOUIS XVI

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MADAME ELIZABETH, SISTER OF KING LOUIS XVI

Philippine-Marie-Hélène-Elizabeth of France, the youngest child of the dauphin, brother to Louis XV, and of Marie-Josèphe of Saxony, was born at Versailles on the 3rd of May, 1764. Her melancholy childhood seemed to prefigure the life of self-abnegation and sorrow reserved for her by fate.

The Princesse Elizabeth was less than a year old when she lost her father and only three years old when her mother died. Louis XV, who was too much taken up with the new favourite, Madame du Barry, to bother himself about the little princess's loneliness, left her entirely to the care of her governess, Madame de Marsan, and of the abbé Montagut, her tutor. The child's aunts, the daughters of Louis XV, were too much absorbed in petty court intrigues to pay any great attention to the needs or the behavour of their niece. So the little girl led such a lonely life at court that she might have had no relations at all, and neither Madame de Marsan nor the abbé Montagut succeeded in making her either happy or lovable.

Proof of this state of things is revealed in a letter written by the Archduchess Marie-Antoinette, who had come to France in 1770 to marry the Princesse Elizabeth's eldest brother, the dauphin Louis, to her mother, the Empress Maria-Theresa, some months after her marriage.[1]

. . . " On my arrival in France," wrote the dauphine Marie-Antoinette, " I found in my young sister Elizabeth

[1] See " Marie-Antoinette, dauphine and young queen," in *Princesses, Ladies and Salonnières of the Reign of Louis XV,* by Thérèse Louis Latour.

a little savage, whom nothing could tame: brusque, rude, passionate and self-willed to a terrifying degree, heedless of all remonstrance and always profoundly sad. Only a mother would have been able to soften her character and dispel her gloomy moods. It was in vain that in youth she was placed under the complete control of governesses and a tutor; that could never be the same thing.

"She has, however, a good disposition, and, what is encouraging, she has a great deal of sensibility. Her obstinacy may develop into character and her proud spirit steer her in the right way."

Thus at that time the princess's teachers had not yet discovered how to develop her gift and qualities. The child's sadness was still further deepened by the marriage of her sister Clothilde with the future king of Sardinia. During the first few weeks which followed the Princesse Clothilde's departure, the Princess Elizabeth shed floods of tears, then she became melancholy, shy and indifferent to everything except perhaps religion.

It was indeed religion which was to transform the princess. At the time of her first communion, she threw herself with such ardour into a life of piety that she would do anything that was asked of her for the love of God. From being rough, she became extremely gentle, her brusqueness gave way to sweet and gracious manners. Even her voice, which had always been harsh and imperious, softened and sometimes succeeded in being caressing and charming. Soon the princess was so attracted by the atmosphere of the religious life that she begged her royal brother to let her take the veil at the Carmelite convent. Louis XVI was distressed by such a request and refused to give his permission. On the advice of Marie-Antoinette the king even decided to emancipate Madame Elizabeth from control, although she was only fourteen. He therefore gave her a separate establishment from May 1778, as well as a fixed income, and allowed her a free hand in the management of her own affairs.

Never was an income put to more pious uses than that of Madame Elizabeth. The king had hardly granted the allowance when this generous princess became the benefactress of the unfortunate and earned the title of "Queen of Pity" which her protégés bestowed on her almost at once, long before the day when she was to be revered as a heroine of self-abnegation and fraternal love.

Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette had judged rightly in thinking that the power to do good would cause Madame Elizabeth to give up the idea of entering the Carmelite convent. She abandoned it to such good purpose that she even looked forward without any feeling of antipathy to the possibility of marrying.

An early project for marriage which would have made her wife to the crown prince of Portugal was for a long time under consideration at court, the preliminaries being even carried through. Out of love for her brother and respect for his decision, the princess concealed her dislike of the scheme, but when it failed she did not hide her joy. On the other hand, a union with the Emperor Joseph II would have been very agreeable to her, but there again she suppressed her feelings out of love and respect for her brother.

Nevertheless Madame Elizabeth would have made a very charming empress, for she was really lovely, with her wealth of hair, her pretty complexion, her honest eyes, in which the beholder seemed to read her very soul, her pure brow, and her delightful, kindly smile!

In spite of the attraction felt by Madame Elizabeth for the Emperor Joseph II, she did not hang her head over the miscarriage of this marriage project, nor did she appear to enjoy her life in France less than formerly. At Montreuil, where Louis XVI had bought Madame de Guéméné's lovely little estate in 1787, Madame Elizabeth played at being a real farmer and was adored by all her tenants. She gave the young girls a *dot* and

married them off, taught the children and was unsparing in her care of the sick and aged.

At court the princess sacrificed her own tastes to convention and custom. She submitted with the best grace in the world to the demand for her presence at fêtes in which she thought it her duty to take part. But when she appeared in the court circle in the middle of one of those *risqué* stories such as her generation loved, voices were instinctively hushed when the company caught sight of her. The purity which radiated from this young girl imposed silence on all who did not think as she did. Queen Marie-Antoinette herself was sometimes embarrassed by her sister-in-law's lofty virtue. She did not venture in front of Madame Elizabeth to show how great a power pleasure exerted over her. On her side, Madame Elizabeth, in spite of the profound goodness which forbade her to judge severely anyone but herself, could not always approve of the queen, and did not hide it. But before others, and in days of misfortune, Madame Elizabeth always found the means to defend the queen and to show that her behaviour was actuated by the most noble motives.

Madame Elizabeth saw the storm of the Revolution approaching more clearly than any other member of the royal family. While Marie-Antoinette was still toying with the new ideas and unwittingly helping to spread them by acting the plays of Beaumarchais with the courtiers while Louis XVI was obstinately indulging in a false confidence, Madame Elizabeth urged firmness and social and economic reforms.

Although none of her counsels was followed, when the Revolution weighed heavily on the royal family, the princess made the cause of her brother and of her sister-in-law so completely her own, that not only did she refuse to flee with her aunts, but in addition she associated herself so closely with the trials of the king, of the queen and of their children that on all the memorable days of their martyrdom she played a beneficent and leading part.

On the 5th of October, 1789, when the starving and excited mob of Parisian mænads and their lovers went to Versailles to demand the presence of the court in Paris, Madame Elizabeth, thanks to her coolness and tact, saved the lives of several of the bodyguard. At the Tuileries she endeavoured to calm the fears of her relations and of all those whom she loved. This is what she wrote on the 13th of October, 1789, to Madame Bombelles, *née* de Mackau, the dearest of her ladies-in-waiting, whose marriage she had brought about a few years previously, sacrificing many of her personal advantages in order to obtain from Louis a *dot* of 100,000 francs and an income of a hundred crowns for the bride.

"There is plenty of bread, my dear Bombelles, the court is appointed as heretofore; we see people every day; there is gaming on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays; dinners in public Sundays and Thursdays and perhaps a state dinner on Sundays. I don't dislike any of this, dear heart. . . . Tell your husband from me that he can be quite easy; people cannot do better than come to Paris; we shall be better off here than anywhere else."

Perhaps, indeed, this desire to cheer those whom she loved induced in her too great an optimism which her brother was all too ready to follow, when she wrote on the 2nd of November, 1789:

"The case of the clergy is, I believe, decided against them and their property is recognised as belonging to the nation. Now we shall see if they will let them enjoy the use of it. It would then be only a partial evil."

When the king and the queen had decided to leave this France which they no longer understood and which they felt unable to satisfy, Madame Elizabeth submitted

to the scheme as she had submitted to their installation at the Tuileries. With them she suffered the humiliation of the return from Varennes. Her resignation, her courteous and gentle manner so impressed the handsome Pétion whom the Assembly had sent with Barnave and Latour-Maubourg to bring back the fugitives to Paris, that the enthusiastic commissary saw in these qualities a proof of the princess's love for him (the 22nd of June, 1791).

Continuing her rôle of devotion and sacrifice, on the 20th of June, 1792, Madame Elizabeth narrowly escaped being killed by one of the rioters who mistook her for the queen and whom the heroic girl would not undeceive in order to save Marie-Antoinette.

On the 10th of August, 1792, she became the Assembly's prisoner with the king, the queen and the royal children, but she forgot herself completely and thought only of her dear ones. On arriving at the Temple prison, one of the first things she said was : " How good God has been to prevent my marriage so as to allow me to be with you in these hours of trial ! " And it was with a smile on her lips that she took possession of the room which had been assigned to her and which up till then had only been used by servants.

Henceforward Madame Elizabeth was to be the consolation of the royal prisoners, the woman upon whom Marie-Antoinette leaned and upon whose heroism she modelled herself. But it was above all when Louis XVI was taken away from his wife and children, when little Louis XVII was snatched in the middle of the night from the arms of the suppliant queen to be delivered over to the most ignoble treatment, that Madame Elizabeth's presence in the Temple became the strong and sole support of the unhappy queen and her daughter. Each day Madame Elizabeth exercised all her ingenuity to find some fresh stratagem whereby she might obtain a glimpse of the royal child ; her efforts were successful and in this way she was able to keep the mother acquainted with the

state of her dear little one's health. But the princess did not tell the queen everything that she saw and heard. She did not tell her of the Phrygian cap which now adorned the head of Louis XVI's son, of the liquors he was made to drink, of the indecent remarks he was taught to repeat, of the low stories which were read aloud to him. This pure and saintly creature, whose soul ached with pain at Montreuil when blasphemies were uttered in her presence, but whom threats left cold and indifferent, suffered now the worst torture she could feel : to observe the demoralisation of her darling nephew which became more complete and poignant each day, to be powerless to prevent it, and to have no one to whom she could confide so intense a sorrow. She only told the queen what would cheer her.

In any case these affectionate deceptions were soon to become impossible. During the night of the 1st of August, 1793, the queen was removed from the Temple without any opportunity of embracing either her daughter or her sister-in-law and never, from that day onwards, was Madame Elizabeth to hear anything more of the queen. It was on the 20th of the preceding June that the princess had received from her aunt Adelaide at Rome the last letter from her family that she would ever read.

On the 21st of September Hébert himself went to the Temple to increase the severity of the young princesses' treatment. Henceforward they had to clean their own room and make their own beds. The decent sheets which had been supplied hitherto were replaced by a few yards of coarse, dirty linen, which they were told could not be bleached for lack of the necessary requisites. This linen was never changed from the month of September, 1793, until the end of the princesses' imprisonment. At this time, too, the prisoners were refused any other than Seine water, which made them ill.

But amid all these meannesses and petty tyrannies,

Madame Elizabeth's gentleness suffered no change. While lacking everything, she still found the means to lavish on her niece a thousand motherly attentions and to look after Madame Royale's health with intelligent care.

Carrying on the queen's work, she taught Louis XVI's daughter to forgive the sins of the French people and to love them, for, she said, they had only gone astray.

Under the protection of this tender care and watchful affection, Madame Royale endured her terrible imprisonment without experiencing all its horrors to the full. But on the evening of the 9th of May, 1794, a grim man entered Madame Elizabeth's room shortly after she had gone to bed, charged with the same mission as those who in similar circumstances had entered the queen's room on the 1st of August, 1793.

"Get up at once, citizeness, you are wanted," said the sinister man, in rough tones.

"Is my niece to remain here?" replied the princess simply.

"That has nothing to do with you, other people will see to that," retorted the Convention's envoy, impatient to drag off his victim.

Then, Madame Elizabeth, with courage and dignity, dressed herself, using her bed as a screen, and approaching her niece's couch she clasped her in a long embrace, saying:

"Don't be frightened. I shall come up again."

"No, you won't come up again," at once protested the ruffian, "take your nightcap with you."

Thus were separated for ever the heroic aunt and her unhappy niece.

The next day, Madame Elizabeth appeared before the Revolutionary Tribunal. She was accused:

1. Of having handed over the diamonds of France to the emigrant princes.
2. Of having conspired against the people during the days of the Revolution.

3. Of having on the 17th of July, 1791, dressed the wounds of the soldiers who had been wounded while fighting against the people.
4. Of having on the 10th of August, 1792, accompanied "the Austrian" to the Swiss, who were manufacturing bullets for the purpose of killing French republicans.
5. Of having treated Capet's son as king.

It was the deputy Dumas who presided at the meeting. The princess was brought before her judges without being told the nature of the charge on which she was indicted, nor that she was allowed to choose a counsel. But when she entered the court Chaveau-Lagarde, the very same man who had, with such spirit, defended the queen, recognised her immediately, and although it was only by chance that he was present at this particular sitting, for no one knew that Madame Elizabeth was to be tried then, he at once begged for the honour of defending her. While receiving permission to do so, he was not allowed to confer on any point with the accused.

In face of this restriction, Chaveau-Lagarde confined himself to a description of the life of virtue, sacrifice and unselfishness which Madame Elizabeth had led. Dumas, foaming at the mouth, stopped him with the remark that he was corrupting public morals.

Madame Elizabeth was naturally unanimously condemned to death. Twenty-four other condemned persons drove in the same tumbrel, that tumbrel of the tortured which Robespierre himself christened "the bier of the living".

On the journey from the Conciergerie to the Place de la Révolution, Madame Elizabeth employed the time by reciting the prayers for the dying and the dead on behalf of her companions and herself. While she prayed, she was recognised by one of the condemned women, Madame de Montmorin, widow of one of the last ministers chosen by Louis XVI. No sooner did Madame de

Montmorin recognise the princess than she pointed her out to the other occupants of the tumbrel, and immediately all showed Madame Elizabeth the deepest respect and the strongest marks of affection. She, however, at once tried to turn her companions' thoughts away from herself and to make them forget and forgive the injuries and injustices of which they were the victims, and to die gladly in the love of God.

When they reached the place of torture, Madame Elizabeth embraced Madame de Montmorin and one of her companions, and was about to embrace them all when the executioner, hustling the condemned, declared that there was no time to waste on such affected nonsense. Then, male and female prisoners alike, made a deep obeisance, one after the other, to the princess, as they walked to the fatal plank. She, ever simple and dignified, bowed to each in turn and prayed for them as the murderous knife descended.

Madame Elizabeth was the last to die. After so many executions, the executioner was in a hurry to finish, and for this reason, when the princess's turn came, he attempted to tear off the fichu worn by the condemned woman, in order to avoid arranging it lower on her neck. "In God's name, Sir," cried Madame Elizabeth, with emotion, "let me remain covered!" There was in these simple words so much vehemence, so much anxious modesty, and withal such courtesy that the executioner, overcome by the princess's will and by her nobility of soul, yielded to her entreaty, and instead of removing the fichu, he carefully arranged it in a way that would not impede his work and yet would leave Madame Elizabeth's bosom unexposed.

So died, at the age of thirty, this daughter of kings, whose passage through the world was marked only by suffering and devoted service to others. The tragedy of this noble and disinterested life over which sorrow had always brooded and which had never been visited by happiness, excited no compassion in the breasts of

her tormentors, for, when Madame Royale asked where her aunt was and when she would see her again, they found it very amusing to make a jest at the expense of the dead by replying to the young princess's question: "Your aunt is taking the air."

THE HOLOCAUST OF ROBESPIERRE

THE RED MASS

29TH OF PRAIRIAL (17TH OF JUNE), 1794

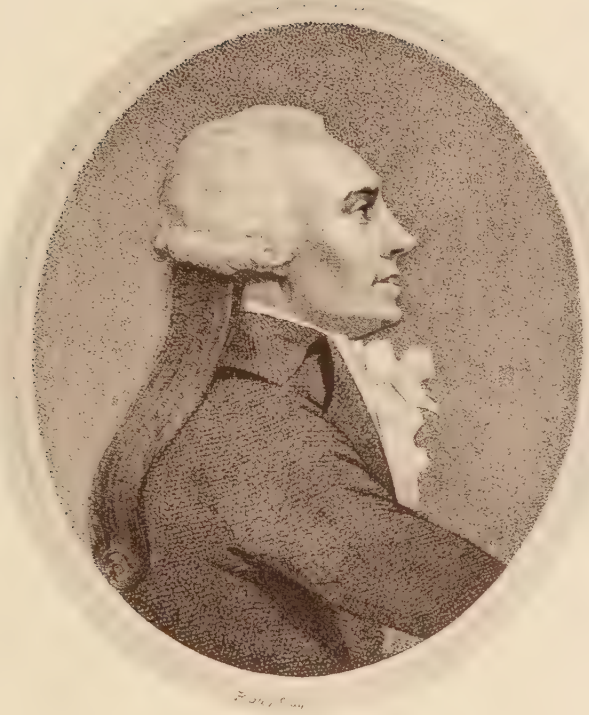
The drama that the member of the Convention, Voulland, and after him, history, has described by the name of the "Red Mass" is one of the most terrible and mysterious of the Revolution.

It brought together under exactly the same accusation of attempted political assassinations, for which there was never in fact any foundation, fifty-four persons of whom very few knew each other and who were widely separated by birth, fortune, education, age and ideas. Yet all were accused of complicity in the same plots and were guillotined, one after the other, in less than an hour on the 29th of Prairial (the 17th of June), 1794, sacrificed to Robespierre and the former actor, Collot d'Herbois.

It was at the beginning of the summer of 1794, just at the time when the Convention had multiplied its victims in order to establish its power: King Louis XVI on the 21st of January, 1793, Charlotte Corday on the 17th of July, 1793, Queen Marie-Antoinette on the 15th of October, 1793, the twenty-one Girondists on the 31st of October, 1793, Madame Roland on the 8th of November, 1793, Barnave at the end of 1793, and Madame Elizabeth on the 10th of May, 1794, to quote only well-known names.

Each member of the Assembly was asking himself whether he, too, had not cause to fear and wondering when the blow would fall which would strike him low. Even those who had been leaders of the Convention soon fell under the knife of the guillotine. Danton, Camille

PLATE XI



MAXIMILIEN ROBESPIERRE

[*face p.* 196

Desmoulins and their friends, Hébert, his wife and his partisans, etc. So great was the panic, that sixty members of the Convention never dared sleep at home for fear of being made prisoners. Others no longer had the courage to get up and kept their beds permanently, paralysed by fear and intent also to prove that it was impossible for them to plot against the Republic since they neither spoke nor wrote to anyone.

The same perturbation reigned outside the Convention ; France was convulsed by the rage for informing which swept through the country. Everybody wanted to denounce someone in order to prove his patriotism and by this means save his head. Now it was the servant spying on the slightest gestures of her mistress so that she might report to the Committee of Public Safety that she had seen her trying on a different dress from those which she usually wore, or receiving a friend who had mentioned the word " king ". Now the neighbour who stated that he had seen shadows moving about the room until the early hours of the morning ; now the jealous relation who came to give notice that his aunt or his cousin had written to an *émigré*. Everything furnished matter for denunciations and arrests. The slightest appearance, the slightest suspicion were transformed into overwhelming facts which filled the prisons with unfortunate people who wondered why they had been arrested and who had denounced them. . . . It was these lies, this régime of denunciations, of terror and of tyranny which prepared the revolting hecatomb of the 29th of Prairial, 1794. This drama had so baleful an effect on Robespierre's popularity that we are justified in asking whether those who helped " The Incorruptible " to organise it were not actuated by the hope and wish to undo him by this bloody spectacle, where the number of victims far surpassed those of previous executions, while the heads struck off were younger, more attractive or lovelier.

Certain of the fifty-four victims of the " Red Mass "

had lain in prison since April, 1794 ; some among them had even been in a little longer. Others, on the contrary, were not arrested until the 23rd of May, 1794. But the Convention, the reporter of the trial, Elie Lacoste, and Fouquier-Tinville, the public prosecutor, would have it that the accused were connected with the same crime : that of plotting against the great and Incorruptible Robespierre and the sympathetic Collot d'Herbois.

Many of those said to be implicated in this so-called plot belonged to the best families of ancient France. They were the Prince de Rochefort-Rohan, the Prince de Saint-Mauris, the Marquis de Sombreuil and his son, old Madame d'Eprémesnil, Madame Lemoine-Crécy and a number of others. But however noble and great their past, it was not they who held the attention and excited the liveliest curiosity, as well as an admiring sympathy.

The two groups which held hearts and eyes captive were that of Madame de Sainte-Amaranthe with her very lovely daughter Emilie de Sartines, her son, and the Vicomte de Pons ; and the group formed by the actress Mademoiselle Grandmaison, her maid Nicole, a child of sixteen, Cécile Renault, a young girl of twenty and her father, whose countenance bore the stamp of unmistakable honesty and candour.

Certainly, no one had been less mixed up in politics and plots than Madame de Sainte-Amaranthe and her family, and none of the unfortunate sufferers in the Revolution was more directly and peculiarly the victim of the informer than were this lady and her relations.

Madame de Sainte-Amaranthe had been and was still an exceedingly pretty woman to whom beauty meant much more than politics. The scion of a noble house in the east of France, she had made the mistake of marrying in her early youth a mere penniless captain, while she was as wealthy as she was pretty. The young couple settled down in Paris, entertained a good deal, and at the end of three years, their entire fortune being dissipated, Madame de Sainte-Amaranthe discovered that her love for her

husband had entirely vanished and that she would like to separate from him. Monsieur de Sainte-Amaranthe also wished to separate. So they parted by mutual consent. Monsieur de Sainte-Amaranthe went to Spain, where, a few years later, he ended his life miserably. Madame de Sainte-Amaranthe, even more beautiful than at the time of her marriage, won the heart of the Prince de Conti who offered her an enormous income and a luxurious *appartement.* The day when the Prince de Conti felt his admiration for Madame de Sainte-Amaranthe waning he yielded place to Monsieur Aucane, *mâitre des Comptes* and the owner of huge estates in Martinique.

So strong was Monsieur Aucane's passionate admiration for Madame de Sainte-Amaranthe that he never asked her to reject the courtship of the adorers who followed everywhere in her train. He surrounded her with every comfort and luxury that Paris could offer, with a box at the *Opéra Italiens,* the *Opéra Français* and the theatre thrown in. In her handsome *appartement* in the rue Vivienne, Madame de Sainte-Amaranthe had even her *"grand lever".*

Madame de Sainte-Amaranthe very early associated her daughter with all this luxury, this life of amours and fêtes. The Vicomte de Pons cherished an ardent affection for the young girl, who was in fact his daughter, a fact which gratified him all the more since Emilie de Sainte-Amaranthe was dazzingly beautiful. All her contemporaries, men and women alike, agreed that her beauty was unique and delightful to behold. The Comte de Tilly wrote: "Emilie de Sainte-Amaranthe was more universally famous for her beauty than any other woman in France."

At first it was the *tout ensemble* of the young girl which aroused admiration, so perfect was her form, so dainty and well-proportioned. Her bearing and whole pose was graceful and dignified. She had a certain distinguished and graceful movement of the head which never failed to surprise and delight; an enchanting smile, compact of

finesse, archness and intelligence, animated her face, which was a charming oval, and her complexion might have been envied by the rose. Her hair, pale-gold in colour, formed a shining frame to her face, while her small and roguish mouth added a childish and ingenuous charm to attractions otherwise disturbing and imposing.

But the measures of the Constituent Assembly came to interrupt the serene and expensive happiness of the ladies de Sainte-Amaranthe, for they considerably impaired Monsieur Aucane's fortune. The idea of organising gambling houses whose returns would maintain his mistress in luxury then occurred to the ardent lover. For this purpose he realised part of his capital and with the money released opened two gambling salons : the one at No. 50, Galeries du Palais Royal, the other in the rue Vivienne in the sumptuous *appartement* occupied by Madame de Sainte-Amaranthe. The mother and daughter presided over the salons with great distinction and correctness ; indeed, they were very particular in regard to the birth, education and manners of those who desired to be on familiar terms at their houses. The suppers which followed the play were dainty, appetising and in good taste. These qualities, joined to the " unique " beauty of Emilie de Sainte-Amaranthe, and to the attractive and pleasing maturity of Madame de Sainte-Amaranthe, drew all the gamblers who had birth and money to the Palais Royal and the rue Vivienne. Things went so well that in a few months Monsieur Aucane had greatly increased his former income.

But such a circle as this was not without danger for the young girl whose virtue was jealously guarded by her mother. Nevertheless, Madame de Sainte-Amaranthe could not prevent Emilie from becoming more inflammable each day and more impatient to discover the hero to whom to dedicate her affections. He was revealed to her by the most simple of incidents. Emilie went to the *Opéra Comique* without her mother to hear a singer about whom all Paris was mad at the time. Hand-

some, well-born, cultivated and a thorough artist, he was the son of a celebrated doctor who had chosen a wife from the ranks of the nobility. His name was Elleviou, and the curtain raiser which had made him renowned was called " Philippe et Georgette ". When Emilie de Sainte-Amaranthe arrived at the *Opéra Comique* Elleviou had already come on and was singing. So dazzling was the young girl's beauty that on her entry the whole audience noticed and admired her. The singer was more captivated than anyone, so much so that when he saw her he was unable to continue his song. Three times, his voice trembling with emotion and his eyes fastened on Mademoiselle de Sainte-Amaranthe, he repeated the words " O ma Georgette, Toi seule embellis ce séjour . . ." but he was incapable of proceeding further. Thus in the most romantic and unexpected way to the accompaniment of the most rapturous strains of the orchestra and in the shimmering light of thousands of candles which looked like as many little conspiring stars, began a burning passion which was to end in a bloody drama.

From the very first evening Emilie knew that Elleviou was madly in love with her, and she loved him passionately in return. She went again to the *Opéra Comique* the next day and the following days, finding henceforth no happiness except in the air that he breathed. This state of things might have continued a long time if Emilie's brother had not disclosed his sister's infatuation to his mother. The mother was furious at the news. A woman of decision and action, she immediately made up her mind to go to Rouen in order to remove her daughter from Elleviou's influence. Emilie wept but was obliged to obey. The next day the whole family, including Monsieur Aucane and the numerous friends who adored Emilie, were at Rouen. There, Madame de Sainte-Amaranthe informed her daughter that she must choose between living permanently in the provinces, if she insisted on remaining faithful to the singer's memory, or

making a sensible marriage which would take them back to Paris, in Emilie's opinion the only possible place to live in.

The alternative appeared awful to Mademoiselle de Sainte-Amaranthe. She loathed the provinces as much as she loved Elleviou. She decided, after the manner of youth which promises to have its revenge for the restrictions imposed on it, and accepted one of the three sons of ministers who sought her hand and heart. It was on this wise that she became Madame Sartines and was able to return to Paris.

As soon as she got back to the capital, Madame Sartines sent Elleviou word and both then knew hours of happiness together. But Elleviou was even less free than Madame Sartines. He was living at the time with an operatic dancer, Clothilde, who later became the wife of Boïeldieu. Clothilde suspecting Elleviou of infidelity, forced open his desk and discovered four notes signed "Georgette", which confirmed her suspicions. From that moment she spied on Elleviou, and as soon as she had found out the identity of the "Georgette" of the love-letters, without saying a word to her lover she told the most spiteful and circumstantial tales about the de Sainte-Amaranthe family to the Committee of General Security. Meanwhile, the lovers feared nothing. They loved one another and were never tired of telling each other so with renewed rapture whenever they met. When, at the beginning of the spring of 1794, Madame de Sainte-Amaranthe, with Monsieur Aucane's consent, decided to close their gambling houses where rough and disrespectful *sansculotte* patriots had replaced the refined and courteous clients of former years, Emilie and Elleviou arranged to continue their meetings at the Château of Suçy-en-Brie, where the de Sainte-Amaranthe and Sartines families went with Monsieur Aucane to await the end of the Revolution.

Elleviou, every day more in love with the superbly handsome girl, betook himself often to the Château of

Suçy-en-Brie. He went there by night disguised as a peasant, entered by the park gate, left open for the purpose, when his mistress's signals, made with a lamp at her bedroom window, warned him that the coast was clear. These signals, this man who was dressed as a peasant, but had the appearance and bearing of a gentleman, the postern left ajar, all were remarked and commented on by neighbours. Here was a good chance to obtain a certificate of patriotism. All the more so, since they thought that the peasant suspect was Baron de Batz, an indefatigable Royalist, who gave the revolutionists a great deal of trouble, subjecting them to ceaseless inconveniences and disappointments and always succeeding in making his escape unseen. These considerations rendered them entirely unscrupulous and they added their denunciations to those of Clothilde. Thus, one evening when Elleviou and Emilie were indulging in rapturous embraces, a village patrol paid a domiciliary visit to the Château. Quick and resourceful, the young woman hid Elleviou in a dressing-room, and then ran to the door, all smiles and holding a bunch of tricolour ribbons in her hand. The municipal officers were struck dumb by her beauty. Emilie took advantage of their amazement to talk gaily to the patrol and to distribute the ribbons which she held in her hand. The men were so moved by this charming reception as well as by Madame Sartines' voice and eyes, that they retired without even visiting her room, let alone the dressing-room, bearing away with them, however, the kitchen utensils.

Unfortunately, this alarm did not make the lovers more prudent. Elleviou's visits to Suçy-en-Brie were quite as frequent as before, and Clothilde, who was now acquainted with all details of the intrigue of Madame Sartines and the actor, multiplied her denunciations to the Committee of General Security. The latter, put on the alert by the neighbours of the de Sainte-Amaranthes and by Elleviou's mistress, no longer doubted that the Château of Suçy-en-Brie was the centre of Baron de Batz's oper-

ations. They doubted it still less now that they believed they had discovered how Baron de Batz had got in touch with the Sainte-Amaranthes. They thought that the meeting had been effected by the actress Grandmaison, Sartines' mistress before he was married, and now mistress, as they believed, of the Baron de Batz. This conviction took the place of proof, and the Committee of Public Safety, without further ado, ordered the arrest of Madame de Sainte-Amaranthe, her daughter and her son-in-law, Monsieur and Madame Sartines, the Vicomte de Pons, Madame de Sainte-Amaranthe's young son, who was hardly sixteen, Mademoiselle Grandmaison and her little maid of sixteen, the artless and sweet Nicole, under the pretext that if the mistress conspired the servant would aid her, and a crowd of lesser fry (the 12th of Germinal, year II, the 1st of April, 1794).

Great was Monsieur Aucane's emotion and astonishment when he descried the Committee of Public Safety's envoys. He could not understand why his peaceful retreat should be mistaken for a refuge for aristocrats, and his friends for Royalist conspirators. He strove to convince the men who had arrived armed with warrants for arrest that the crime imputed to the Sainte-Amaranthes and the Sartines could not possibly have been committed by them. But he exhausted his powers of persuasion and eloquence in vain. The men had come to make the arrests and would listen to nothing else. Madame de Sainte-Amaranthe in a transport of rage and indignation added her protests to those of Monsieur Aucane, but she was no more successful than he. Despite Monsieur Aucane's entreaties, Madame de Sainte-Amaranthe's swoons and the contemptuous and impassive attitude of the beautiful Emilie, they had to go.

According to Fleury's memoirs,[1] Maximilien Robespierre, fascinated by the memory of Madame Sartines'

[1] Fleury (Abraham-Joseph), the French actor, born in 1750, died in 1822, left memoirs which have helped to clear up several points in the French Revolution.

beauty, is reported to have tried to prevent the arrest of the ladies de Sainte-Amaranthe. In order to do this, he is said to have despatched an anonymous letter to the Château de Suçy-en-Brie two hours before the arrest was made. In this letter he advised, according to Fleury, the rapid flight of the whole family, adding that a few hours later they would no longer be able to leave. It is to be feared that in making such a statement Fleury's dramatic imagination ran away with him; for nothing corresponding to this putative act of clemency is to be seen in Robespierre's career. Women were antipathetic to the Incorruptible. He detested them because there was no room in his nature for sentimentality. Not even to his sister Charlotte, who was whole-heartedly devoted to him, did he ever show a single mark of tenderness. One might say as much in the case of Eléonore Duplay whom he could have married long before Thermidor if he had been in love with her. It may indeed be said that the prettier the woman the more inclined Robespierre was to treat her harshly, for his temperament, cold, bilious, vain and jealous, would bear a grudge against this woman for her superior advantages. If a letter was sent to the Château de Suçy-en-Brie to save Emilie, it was sent by Saint-Just, not by Maximilien Robespierre. However this may be, notwithstanding their complete innocence of any political plotting, the Sainte-Amaranthes, the Sartines and the Vicomte de Pons were arrested on the evening of the 1st of April, 1794, and mother, daughter, son-in-law, the son and the Vicomte de Pons were locked up about two o'clock the following night in the Convent des Anglaises, which had been transformed into a prison. Their presence there was only remembered on the day when they were wanted for the Red Mass of the 29th of Prairial. Some hours before the Château de Suçy-en-Brie was plunged in despair (the 12th of Germinal), Saint-Just had contemptuously flung the name of "the infamous Sainte-Amaranthe" into the speech which caused the death of Danton. He had even stopped for

a few minutes to speak of the meals "at a hundred crowns per head in which this ignoble family indulged notwithstanding private and public distress". This was to prepare the Assembly and the public for what was to follow.

Whilst the male and female occupants who were removed from the Château de Suçy had been languishing in the Convent des Anglaises for close upon two months, two incidents, of no importance on the surface, occurred on one and the same day at Paris.

The first had as its central figure a deputy of the Convention: Collot d'Herbois. This deputy, a former actor, was accused, although unjustly, of having robbed a certain person, by name Admiral, of his mistress. Admiral, still in love with her, despite the fact that she had left him, and jealous of Collot d'Herbois, determined to revenge himself on the deputy for his love troubles. So he drew his sword on him, but missed wounding him. This happened on the 4th of Prairial, year II (the 23rd of May, 1794).

Now, on this very day Cécile Renault, the second daughter of a stationer, an honest man and at the same time a very keen Royalist, whose shop was at the corner of the rue de la Lanterne and the rue des Marmousets, inconsolable over the death of the king and queen and of so many of their friends, carried through a scheme which she had long since cherished and prepared. She attracted attention to herself in order that people might know how greatly she regretted the king, the queen, and their family, and now she hated Robespierre and his friends.

The Renault family comprised the father, Antoine Renault, three sons, of whom two were in the army, and Cécile, the youngest daughter, aged twenty, the eldest having died several years previously. These people were a perfectly typical family of small Parisian shopkeepers of the old régime. Very honest, economical, and industrious, their chief pleasures consisted in prospering in their

business, enjoying a simple yet comfortable domestic life, in loving one another devotedly and in serving their God and their king. The death of Louis XVI and of the members of the royal family, as well as the fall of the monarchy, had sorely afflicted the Renaults, plunging them into a state of utter sadness. Cécile, who constantly dwelt on this trouble the while she looked after the house and shop with sedulous care, sought the best means of proclaiming her sentiments to the murderers of the king. In preparing for this demonstration she harboured thoughts and feelings similar to those of Charlotte Corday, which made her ready to sacrifice her life for her country. Like the heroic Norman girl, Cécile wished her gown to be equal to the mission with which she charged herself. This was why at the beginning of May she had her prettiest frock, which was of white muslin, washed and ironed. She even said to the laundress : " Be quick over it ; one never can tell what may happen. I might be guillotined next week, for aught I know."

On the 23rd of May, Cécile, in order to be free, insisted that her father should go for a walk. After he had gone out, she hailed a friend whom she saw passing down the street, and chatted with her until six o'clock in the evening, when she bade her farewell, saying that she was going upstairs to her bedroom. In reality, Cécile Renault then went to the joiner, Duplay.

When she arrived at Duplay's house, Cécile asked to see Robespierre, but was informed by Eléonore Duplay that he was out. Assuming a haughty and censorious air, Cécile, raising her voice on purpose that the neighbours might hear her, retorted : " I am very much surprised that Robespierre is not at home ! As a public servant it is his business to be in to all visitors." Just as the young shopkeeper flung this gibe at Robespierre two of his friends crossed the courtyard. Considering the remark disrespectful, one of them, more indignant than the other, seized the girl angrily by the arm and pushed her into the

road. But Cécile, who desired to exalt royalty by her action, cried aloud with still greater insolence and daring : " In the old régime when anyone called to see the king, he was admitted at once."—" So you regret the days of kings ? " immediately rejoined one of the two friends of Robespierre.—" Ah ! I would shed my heart's blood," exclaimed the young Royalist enthusiastically, " to have a king again ! In my opinion you are simply tyrants and nothing else ! "

This was too much ! To proclaim love for the king at Robespierre's very door seemed to his two friends a crime against their great man ! Cécile Renault was too dangerous a character to remain at large, they themselves would conduct her forthwith to the Committee of General Security.

Cécile heard their decision with a smile on her lips. She had struck a blow for royalty. She had declared her love for it and denounced the others as tyrants. Now she would be able to go to prison. She asked permission of her guards to stop for a moment at the *Café Payen* ; because, convinced that she would not return home again, she had deposited here, in order to pick them up as she passed, her pretty muslin dress, a jacket and some underlinen.

Brought before the committee, she was at once interrogated. Those who saw and listened to her were amazed by her composure, and her satirical downright answers. She stated that she had gone to Robespierre's to see " if he suited her ", that she was besides, " curious to know what a tyrant was like ". " Without a doubt," she added, " I prefer a king to fifty thousand tyrants." And with a smile which seemed at once to scorn and pity those slaves of the master she went on to explain : " I have brought these clothes because I shall be very glad to have a change by me in the place where I am going." Thinking to get the upper hand and at last to frighten this girl who was laughing at them, one of the members of the committee then asked in tones full of menace : " Where

do you think, then, that you will be taken ? " Unhesitating, distinct and astounding in its utter indifference to the terrible images called up, came the answer : " To prison and thence to the guillotine."

Decidedly, there was no way of getting the better of this young girl who looked so gentle and ingenuous. Then she was searched. In her pocket were found a mirror and two small pen-knives. One of them which had belonged to her dead sister, Cécile had kept in remembrance ; the other was a present which one of her two brothers in the army had bought her at the fair. These two knives, tiny though they were, were at once declared to be the weapons with which Cécile had intended to commit her crime against Robespierre. In consequence, the busy and respectable little shopkeeper in the rue des Marmousets was imprisoned in the Conciergerie towards midnight.

At one o'clock in the morning all the members of the Renault family then in Paris were arrested : the father and one of his sisters who had been a nun. Both submitted to arrest with the same calm as Cécile, but without her touch of originality and raillery. The father, especially, was very assiduous in the discharge of his duties as master of the house, anxious not to leave before he had found a home for their beautiful pet cat. " I am bringing you our cat and shall be very grateful if you will take care of it while we are away," he said to the neighbour to whom, in response to his entreaty, he had been allowed to take the animal. Having accomplished this business, he declared himself ready to follow those who had come for him.

It was this pathetic and naïve adventure of Cécile Renault, combined with Admiral's act of violence against Collot d'Herbois, out of which was to grow the big parricidal and Royalist plot against Robespierre, Collot d'Herbois and the Convention !

From the 5th of Prairial the incident assumed considerably larger proportions. The Convention had been

within an ace of being wrecked. The upright Robespierre, the indefatigable builder of the ideal Republic, owed his safety to the Supreme Being whose cult he had re-established so grandiosely in France. Collot d'Herbois, staunch supporter of Robespierre, had also only escaped death by a miracle. All the last supporters of monarchy had lent either their assistance or their money to further the gigantic plot. Such were the tales, as imaginary as they were sensational, that the committees caused to be circulated all on account of Admiral's anger arising out of his love affair and of Cécile Renault's childish demonstration.

But in order to support these affirmations of a gigantic plot against the two deputies and the Convention it was necessary to parade a large number of culprits. Not by producing merely the three members of the Renault family and Admiral would the committees create a belief in a conspiracy so awful that the life of the Convention itself had been endangered.

It was this difficulty which suggested to the minds of the members of the two committees the idea of collecting from the prisons, which for that matter were very full, all the men and the women whose inconspicuous or equivocal lives made it easy to accuse them of anything and everything.

So, while the examination of the Renaults was proceeding, while Cécile was making sport of the examining and prosecuting judges as she had made sport of the members of the committee who had thrown her into gaol, disconcerting them with her talk of "papa" and of her frocks, and even causing them to be sent for in the middle of the night in order that she might communicate an absolutely unimportant detail, the committees had the prisons combed for the purpose of discovering anybody who might, with some verisimilitude, be declared guilty of having taken part in the conspiracy of Prairial.

Thus it came about that there was brought to the Conciergerie on a charge of complicity in the Royalist plot

and attempted murder the "bull man", imprisoned in all probability for some piece of indecency or brutality, Madame Lemoine-Créçy's *valet de chambre*, with whose history the world was unacquainted; the lady was likewise brought thither, as were also the aged Madame Eprémesnil and all whose names proclaimed them Royalists, and many others of whom no one knew anything.

But these numbers were insufficient. One must comb and comb again. It was after much reflection and driven by the necessity to increase the batch, that the men who fed the guillotine thought of the Sainte-Amaranthes, of Mademoiselle Grandmaison, in a word, of the entire group of prisoners who had been arrested on account of their supposed relations with the Chevalier de Batz. This trial was really the trial of the Chevalier de Batz, for he alone could have organised such a dangerous plot. It was, therefore, essential to assemble all his friends at the Conciergerie.

But no one could remember where the Sainte-Amaranthes, the Sartines and the Vicomte de Pons had been imprisoned. They were sought, unsuccessfully, at the Luxembourg, then at the Abbaye, at Saint Germain des Près; the committee's emissaries were about to abandon the quest, when, for conscience sake, they looked in at the Convent des Anglaises which lay along their route.

Unhappily for the unfortunate individuals concerned it was precisely here that they were to be found. They were roughly awakened, told to dress quickly, and as soon as they descended they were pushed into the carts which conveyed them to the Conciergerie. Here they finished the night which had begun at the Convent des Anglaises and which was to be their last night on earth.

The next morning, the 29th of Prairial, year II (the 17th of June, 1794), a noisy, curious and excited crowd thronged the court in order to be present at the trial of those accused of the great crime. The affair was surrounded by so much mystery as well as unwholesome charm, stirred by the names of Sainte-Amaranthe, of

the beautiful Emilie and of Grandmaison, that the audience, which was larger than usual, was also more moved and more demonstrative, than was its wont. The people bawled, whistled, sang and enjoyed themselves enormously. When the fifty-four prisoners entered, especially the proud and lovely citizeness Sartines, the crowd jostled each other with such violence that many were trampled under foot.

But the trial was not to be retarded by lengthy preliminaries. It comprised no examination, no disputation. Not only had the accused persons no time or permission to obtain the services of an *avocat*, but none of them had the right to speak in his own defence. The Prince de Saint-Mauris wanted to produce certificates to prove his patriotism, another carried papers which showed that it was impossible for him to have taken part in a plot on the 4th of Prairial ; neither was allowed to make use of his documents. The whole trial consisted in putting one and the same question to each of the fifty-four prisoners, namely : " Did you take part in the intended assassination of Robespierre and Collot d'Herbois on the 4th of Prairial ? "

All the accused persons replied in the negative, with the single exception of Admiral. But their answer was fruitless. In less than half an hour the victims collected together for this hecatomb were condemned. Fifty-five questions had sufficed to achieve this result, and if there had been fifty-five instead of fifty-four, it was because the production of his certificate of patriotism by the Prince de Saint-Mauris obliged the president to ask him if he had obtained one of the certificates on the 4th of Prairial.

The jury brought in a verdict of guilty in regard to all the charges heaped on the prisoners by the public prosecutor, Fouquier-Tinville, and the president, Dumas, passed on all the sentence of death to be carried out the same day.

The sentence was completed by the decision that in

each case the condemned person should go to execution clothed in the red robe of a parricide; for this Incorruptible and Great Robespierre and this sympathetic Collot d'Herbois whom the condemned prisoners had wished to assassinate had been fathers to them just as much as to the rest of the country.

The sentence that the condemned persons were to go to the scaffold clothed in red greatly complicated their execution. The court had not fifty-four red robes of shame to distribute. No single shop had a sufficient quantity of scarlet material to supply its needs. It was necessary to visit a great many shops in order to procure the number of yards required for all these robes.

While these steps were being taken, the condemned persons waited at the clerk's office until the executioners should arrive to dress them for their death. Forty-four of them waited sitting on a bench on which were placed cords to bind them, and these cords were all stained with the blood of the victims of the previous day.

But the condemned prisoners remained perfectly calm during the four hours' gloomy wait just as they had been calm in face of the crying injustice of their condemnation. It was the crowd outside that grew impatient. It was annoyed that the hour of its spectacle was postponed.

In the office, Emilie, with her proud beauty and impassive countenance, began the work of the executioner by cutting off her magnificent tresses. She wished Elleviou to receive them as a last souvenir. She hoped he would keep them and that they would help him to hold the woman who had loved him so much in perpetual remembrance. Since she had been in prison Emilie had also succeeded in letting Elleviou know where she was. But the actor had been unable to gain access to his beloved. He had then tried to effect her release, but here again he had failed. To-day all that Emilie wanted was to be certain that the concierge would keep her locks until Elleviou came to claim them. She never doubted that he would come, for he had been told that she was leaving

him this souvenir. Madame Sartines was not deceived in believing that Elleviou would come and claim her hair, for it was his greatest talisman against suicide after her death.

At last the organisers of the execution decided that it would take too long to make up all the red robes that were needed. The condemned persons should be draped in the material. That would suffice to show that they were parricides. The effect in reality was much more majestic and striking than if the robes had been stitched. Those well-born men and women, like Mademoiselle Grandmaison, to whom the stage had lent an air of glamour, or Cécile Renault whose grace set off whatever she wore, all looked artistic, imposing or pathetic in those improvised draperies which adapted themselves to their contours, their movements, their art in knowing how to wear them. Emilie Sartines, especially, seemed more beautiful than ever in this red garment, so daring and provocative, which showed every curve of her magnificent shoulders, her supple, well-developed bosom, her rounded, slender waist which could not escape notice emphasised as it was by such a brilliant colour. When the executioner's men removed her garments in order to clothe her in the brilliant-hued fabric, Madame de Sainte-Amaranthe swooned after giving vent to a cry of anguish. Her husband became purple with rage. Her young brother burst into tears. Emilie remained impassive.

Now the victims were ready and the eight tumbrels which were to convey them to the scaffold approached the office. The crowd surged backwards and forwards on hearing these tidings. They had waited for so long and the batches which were about to depart were so interesting !

But when they saw the eight tumbrels one behind the other, their feeling underwent a change.

The first tumbrel contained women only. There were six occupants, among whom were the charming and simple little Cécile Renault whose mischievous and

sympathetic eyes searched the crowd for friends; her aunt, dignified and resigned, who seemed to be praying; Mademoiselle Grandmaison as self-possessed as though she were on the stage and the sight of whom recalled to many the pleasure they had had in listening to her.

In the second tumbrel it was Emilie Sartines who dominated the scene, so beautiful and seductive did she look. Notwithstanding her bound arms she supported her mother who was fainting but who had had nothing to do with a plot, her eyes overflowing with amazement, fright and also with love and admiration for her daughter. Emilie sought by every means in her power to turn Madame Amaranthe's thoughts away from the catastrophe. When the eight tumbrels filed off, the young woman, struck by the beautiful effect which they created, exclaimed in a voice empty of any sadness, "See, mama, how pretty these red cloaks are! We look like cardinals!"

But there was one moment in the journey when Emilie's power to control her emotion failed her. This was when she descried Elleviou among the crowd. With distorted features, his clothes in disarray, his eyes wild, the actor endeavoured to force his way through the crowd of curious spectators in order to reach his beloved. The unfortunate girl gave him one solemn look of farewell, then closed her eyes, for if they had dwelt longer on the hero of her romance she would have lost consciousness. When she again recovered her self-control and looked about her, she saw, standing nearby, the actress Clothilde with a malevolent and triumphant expression on her face.

In the third tumbrel rode the aged: old Sombrieul, so dignified and distinguished; Monsieur Renault, with his open countenance and honest, peaceful expression; the Vicomte de Pons, contemptuous and indifferent; here they rode, all these white-haired men, whose faces bore the stamp of loyalty and whose sole crime consisted in being in prison at a moment when their death would serve to intensify patriotic devotion to Robespierre.

Thus passed, one after the other, sympathetic, distinguished, or beautiful, the fifty-four red silhouettes. The mob, experiencing none of the emotions which it had come out to seek, attracted, on the contrary, by the general charm and distinction which emanated from the condemned prisoners, began to express disapprobation. " All these victims to avenge Robespierre ! He could not have more if he were a king ! " The better educated wondered, indeed, if there had ever been so many lives sacrificed to please a king, especially so many women and children. Those who organised the scene at the scaffold on the 29th of Prairial committed a blunder in putting all the women and all the young girls and young men together in the tumbrels ; if it were not a blunder, then they betrayed Robespierre in the most knavish and harmful manner.

But the most tragic and striking ceremony was yet to be performed.

It was to be consummated on the scaffold which that very day Voulland was to christen the " High Altar ".

Not before seven o'clock in the evening did the last of the eight tumbrels reach the place of execution. The crowd ranged themselves round the scaffold and the victims occupied wooden benches which had been erected round the guillotine. They were to watch their comrades die while awaiting their own turn. The Vicomte de Pons was seated between Madame de Sainte-Amaranthe and Emilie whose husband sat on her other side. Sartines was so desperately in love with his wife that he is said to have taken advantage of the occasion to whisper low in her ear : " I hold death itself a favour, since it will unite us in the tomb."

But the executions had already begun. Cécile Renault was the first to lay her head on the block. She approached it without the smallest change in her bearing or expression. Next came the turn of the " bull man " who had been one of the glories of the fairs in the neighbourhood of Paris. After him followed Mademoiselle Grandmaison's little

maid of sixteen. This child behaved to the executioner with the same gentle and modest politeness with which she had been taught to receive her mistress's guests. When the executioner laid her head on the block, she said to him prettily: "Am I all right like this, Sir?" The slaughters were continued in order of importance, beginning with the humblest and ending with the best known, but in less than an hour the fifty-four heads had fallen and the terrible plot was atoned for.

It has been said that before the prisoners' departure to the scaffold Fouquier-Tinville, acting as Saint-Just's emissary, offered Emilie Sartines her liberty if she would say that she was an expectant mother. But Emilie, knowing full well the price she would have to pay for the liberty offered by either Saint-Just or Fouquier-Tinville, refused it with contempt. Fouquier-Tinville nursed his anger against the beautiful woman; "Morbleu!" he is reported to have said to Voulland, "I will see if that drab's courage does not give out before the end! I will go and see her throat cut even if it means missing my dinner!" To miss his dinner was so serious a thing in Fouquier-Tinville's eyes, that if he really did miss it on that occasion, it was the only time it ever happened while he was at liberty!

Voulland falling in with Fouquier-Tinville's suggestion, replied: "Come along, let us go to the foot of the High Altar and see the celebration of the Red Mass."

Robespierre was avenged! Streams of blood had flowed to his honour and glory and by his authority, but Michelet, Louis Blanc, and numbers of less well-known writers, are convinced that the 29th of Prairial was the preface to the 9th of Thermidor. On that day for the first time patriots openly blamed the deed which had been done on Robespierre's behalf. They felt that it was more than would have been done in the case of a king. They were frightened at the sight of so much bloodshed at one time. They wondered if young girls who looked so artless and women, some among whom were only known

for their love of pleasure and others for their prayers and the nobility of their lives, could have committed the crimes of which they were accused. They remained in a state of doubt and dissatisfaction. The feeling created by the 29th of Prairial leads us to ask whether that day may not have been an act staged by the committees in order to rid themselves of Robespierre.

THE DEVOTEES OF ROBESPIERRE

THE CULT OF THE "MOTHER OF GOD"

Maximilien Robespierre, who was elected president of the Convention on the 21st of August, 1793, very shortly after his admission to the Committee of Public Safety, at once had visions of securing supreme power and becoming sole master of France. The rest of the Jacobins began, like himself, by supporting the Terror, at any rate as a temporary measure, but they were blind, at the commencement of their colleague's presidency, to his feverish and boundless ambition. Robespierre, however, from the very first day of his accession sought to utilise everything, both power and accidental circumstances, to rid himself of the popular republicans who might stand in his way.

Fortunate in that Charlotte Corday's indomitable courage had already removed from his path Marat, a wild figure, but formidable by his very extravagances; that Philippe Egalité, who had died on the scaffold, could be a rival no longer, Robespierre set to work to bring charges against, one after the other, all the notable republicans whom he feared.

On the 31st of October, 1793, twenty-one Girondins were led out to die. On the following 8th of November, it was the turn of Madame Roland, who had formerly received Robespierre in her salon. "The Incorruptible" was lucky in that the death of the wife rid him of her husband, the ex-minister Roland. Condorcet, the great philosopher-mathematician who was a revolutionary by reason of his ardent scientific belief in the progress of mankind, was also thrown into prison because he had

partially unmasked Robespierre. He had denounced him as "the head of a faction" who had nothing of what makes the head of a state. If Condorcet did not perish on the scaffold it was because he succeeded in taking poison while in prison.

In March and April, 1794, Robespierre sent to the guillotine first the Hébertists, whose leader, Hébert, had been one of the instigators of the September massacres, and whom it was therefore absolutely impossible to tax with moderantism, then the Dantonists, headed by Danton, organiser of August the 10th, 1792, and inspirer of the frontier victories, and Camille Desmoulins, Robespierre's great College friend at whose marriage he had been a witness and to whose child he had stood godfather. Hosts of others were also sent to their death, chiefly because Robespierre, who desired to become dictator, feared them.

Then, when the quantity and quality of the victims had opened the eyes of those who were at first Robespierre's friends, these men wished to defend themselves against him. But "The Incorruptible" was too formidable for a frontal attack. The fear he inspired convinced them that the slightest gesture against the chief of the Terror might send them all to the guillotine. They endeavoured to discover an indirect means of compassing his downfall.

The idea of the course to pursue in order to attain this ardently desired end originated in the Committee of General Security, the rival and enemy of the Committee of Public Safety, where Robespierre reigned supreme. It was probably suggested by the preparations then on foot in connection with the festival of the "Supreme Being" which Robespierre wished to make infinitely magnificent and impressive. He was building on the restoration of a divine worship to establish him definitely in power. He thought that the French people, glad at last to have a true religion again and dazzled by the pomp and splendour of its inauguration, would find it

quite natural to accept as their declared master the man who had been noble and generous enough to give it to them.

It was on this account that for months on end Robespierre had preparations made for this festival, to which he also devoted his personal attention. The most celebrated musicians of the day: Gossec, Lesueur, Méhul, Cherubini, composed hymns for an occasion that Robespierre wished to make unforgettable. Several days before the date fixed, the 8th of June, 1794, musicians distributed in the various Paris squares made the passers-by rehearse songs for the great day.

All this had turned men's thoughts to religious questions and practices. Vadier, the most prominent member of the Committee of General Security and one of Robespierre's bitterest enemies whose southern temperament was reinforced by an intuitive imagination, thought to himself that Robespierre, before arriving at the idea of the festival of the "Supreme Being," must have tried to win over certain of the religious sects that had sprung up and multiplied in secret in the capital since the churches had been closed to divine worship. What luck it would be if the master could be shown "playing the fanatic with one of these sects". "The mummer who desired to recreate the abolished deity", as Vadier said, would not be able to stand against the ridicule to which such an affair would give rise, and this ridicule would be Robespierre's own work and not that of his enemies. Vadier determined to explore this possibility. As he had almost the whole of the Paris police at his disposal, the thing was relatively easy, all the more so since just then the Committee of General Security possessed two exceptional police officers, Sénar and Héron. It was these two cunning sleuths whom Vadier sent in search of some grotesque affair of religion which might cover Robespierre with ridicule.

The two confederates were not slow to discover what was wanted. They brought Vadier a document confis-

cated from the papers of Chaumette before his execution in March 1794, in the course of a search made in January 1793 by the commissioner of police of the *Droits de l'Homme* section at the house of a certain Catherine Théo who called herself "The Mother of God". This document contained no other proper names than those of the "Mother of God" and of her acolytes; but there was a great deal about a person designated merely by the pronoun *He*, written each time with a capital letter. The document stated *inter alia*: "*He* called a few days ago. *He* gave me his blessing; and he often repeated the prayer." Vadier and his officers insisted on reading Robespierre into this *He* who had been at Catherine Théo's and seemed held in high esteem by the sect. From then onwards, it became imperative to obtain precise and detailed information about Catherine Théo and her followers.

Catherine, who was born at Barenton in the diocese of Avranches, in Normandy, on the 5th of May, 1716, was of very humble origin. Her father, a common day-labourer, was burdened with so large a family that he was forced to send his children out very early to earn their own living. Thus it was that Catherine went to Paris even before the age when girls usually enter service. However, she found a place at once, then another, and finally, being of a very pious and zealous turn of mind, she was profoundly happy to be engaged as a servant in the convent of the Miramionnes.

It was while thus employed that Catherine began to wander in her mind, to declare that she had a high spiritual mission and that she had come into the world to transform France. In vain the Archbishop of Paris, Monseigneur Christophe de Beaumont, tried to cure her of her crazy pretensions. He could do nothing with her, and the servant of the Miramionnes, accused of blasphemy by the curé of Saint-Gervais de Paris, was sent to the Bastille, from the Bastille to la Force and finally to la Salpêtrière. She spent altogether three years in prison,

from the 29th of May, 1779, to the 27th of June, 1782. At the end of this time, being found entirely harmless, she was released.

But she had won the reputation of a martyr by this imprisonment. A widow, a dressmaker by trade, Madame Godefroid, who lived on the fifth story overlooking the courtyard of a house in the rue des Rosiers, took in the persecuted girl when she came out of prison. She made herself Catherine Théo's servant and tended her with veneration and love. These manifestations more than ever convinced the Norman of the importance of her person and mission. She soon became more definite and declared herself the " Mother of the Word ", able thereby to read even the future. Her son had endowed her with immortality and she had the power to confer this privilege on her followers. However illiterate she might be and however absurd in her affirmations, she soon had followers who numbered several well-known names : such as the Marquise de Lacroix and that Saint-Martin who was the first to find the formula which dominated the French Revolution : liberty, equality, fraternity.

Catherine Théo and the widow Godefroid lived thus for ten years, the widow serving the visionary with adoration, both gradually laying down the ceremonies, beliefs and duties of their sect and gathering an increasing number of disciples. The two women were supremely happy, and neither the disorders of 1789 nor the convulsions of 1793 ruffled their calm. Believing that they were in daily communication with Heaven, they saw in terrestrial events only the means of bringing to the " Word ", through His mother, as large a number as possible of believers and worshippers.

When Héron and Sénar, armed with the document seized from among Chaumette's papers, set out to find the " Mother of God ", she no longer lived in the rue des Rosiers. The cult originated by Catherine Théo had become too important and its followers too numerous for the exiguous accommodation of the widow Godefroid.

The two women had moved to the quarter of la Montagne Sainte-Geneviève and were installed in the rue Contrescarpe.

Ever since the first week of May 1794, Vadier's agents had been acquainted with these facts, and on the 6th of May, Héron presented himself at Catherine's door as "a hesitating brother seeking the light". He was kindly received. "Come in, brother," said one of the "Mother's" followers, "you are going to be initiated into our comforting mysteries." But Héron preferred, now that he had ascertained the locale and seen the people who frequented it, to return the next day with Sénar, for more precise and detailed observations. He replied that he would rather wait to be initiated until the morrow when he would have with him a friend who would also benefit.

With this reply Héron left, and the following day, at eight o'clock in the morning, he again appeared at the house of the "Mother of God", but this time with Sénar.

As soon as they were seen, the young woman of the previous day approached them with these words: "Come, mortal men, to immortality, the 'Mother of God' permits you to enter."

When the two companions were ushered into the room where the "Mother" received, a young woman, who was called "L'Eclaireuse" (The Illuminator), rang a bell. At the sound, the curtains of an alcove parted and Théo appeared. Tall, wizened, almost transparent in her extreme emaciation, trembling upon her legs, which had become too weak to carry the whole weight of her body, supported by two pretty assistants, one of whom bore the title of "La Chanteuse" (The Songstress), Catherine Théo and her surroundings formed an austere and impressive picture, reminiscent of the religious canvases of the Spanish masters. But it was only a fugitive vision, for her two pretty assistants very quickly helped her to sit in a blue velvet arm-chair which was reserved for her use alone and which always occupied the same place

behind the curtains. Hardly was the " Mother " seated when the two assistants genuflected before her, kissed her slipper and rose saying " Glory be to the Mother of God ".

Catherine did not speak, but the two young women, after paying her homage, brought her a ewer filled with fresh water. " L'Envoyée du Fils " (The Envoy of the Son) washed her hands, dried them with a remarkably white linen cloth and " L'Eclaireuse " then passed the same cloth over her forehead, eyes and ears. Then a tray was brought, on which was served the breakfast of the " Mother ". This consisted of slices of bread and butter and a cup of *café au lait*. While Catherine Théo partook of it a large number of disciples arrived and gathered around her. Among them Héron and Sénar noticed particularly a man dressed in grey, with a monastic air, who, as soon as he entered, occupied a special place near the " Mother of God ". After a scrutiny as careful as it was rapid, the two police officers were certain that the man in grey was a former Chartreux, Dom Gerle, who had been a member of the Constituent Assembly, and on good terms with Robespierre. Perhaps Dom Gerle still had friendly relations with the president of the Convention. The presence of Dom Gerle at Catherine Théo's and the place of honour that he occupied were fresh grist to Vadier's mill.

When breakfast was finished, " L'Eclaireuse " again wiped the face of the " Mother of God ", who was then ready to begin the ceremony proper. She began with the purification of the two new brothers : " Children of God," said Catherine, " your Mother is in your midst and will begin by purifying the two uninitiated."

After these words " L'Eclaireuse " relieved Sénar of his hat and asked him if he desired the light. Sénar replied with firmness that he did. " Can you read ? " was the second question. " A little," replied Vadier's man. After this satisfactory answer, " L'Eclaireuse " led Sénar up to Catherine and made him kneel before her. " My son," said the " Mother ", " it is my duty to admit you.

Join your hands." Sénar obeyed, and " L'Eclaireuse " breathed on him after telling him that he was about to receive the seven gifts of God. Then she stepped behind him, took hold of his head which she kept perfectly still, and the " Mother of God " touched him upon the forehead and eyelids, behind the right ear, upon the left cheek and twice upon the chin with her lips. After that her fingers made the sign of the cross upon his forehead. The new initiate was informed by " L'Eclaireuse " that he must give back to the " Mother " the kisses that he had received from her, which he did ; and when he had finished Catherine said to him : " My son, you are admitted."

Héron submitted to exactly the same ceremonial and received at the end the same affirmation : " My son, you are admitted."

Then there appeared on the scene a woman far prettier still than " La Chanteuse " and " L'Eclaireuse ", who was called " La Colombe " (The Dove). She it was who explained to Sénar and Héron that, thanks to the grace of the Mother, five of the seven seals of the Gospel were already broken. The sixth seal was about to be removed and the seventh would soon follow in its turn. When this moment came, the world would be made new by " a single flash of lightning " which would make the earth quite flat, without any mountains. Then there would be no one left alive except the elect of the " Mother of God ". All the rest would be no more than corpses deprived of spiritual as well as of corporal life. But the elect of the " Mother of God " would return to their homes and live in perfect happiness for ever and ever, free of all cares, safe from all danger, in the plenitude of blessings both material and spiritual.

Sénar, playing to perfection his rôle of new convert, exclaimed in a sort of ecstasy : " O, how happy I am ! " Héron asked : " What will be our sign of recognition ? " —" We shall have one," replied " La Colombe ", " when the great event takes place ; but for the moment be content with that which has been given to you." There-

upon " La Colombe" read aloud the Gospel of Christmas Eve and ended by saying : " The Mother here present sees God the Father and speaks with him. They have known each other for twenty-five years."

Héron left before the last part of the ceremony under pretext of having work to do. In reality, he had gone to call the troops which he had posted close to Catherine Théo's house. While the inspired woman, " La Colombe " and the other officiants of the sect of the " Mother of God " were still lost in the mystic charm of prayer and assembly, Héron's soldiers were invading the great hall of worship, and, in the name of the law, prohibiting anyone to leave it. (May the 8th, 1794.)

Immediately the two converts of the morning changed into severe and distrustful questioners who professed to want to know everything, especially what their victims tried to hide from them. The name which they wanted to elicit by their examinations was that of Robespierre. They were convinced that all the women, from the self-styled " Mother of God ", " L'Eclaireuse ", " La Chanteuse " and " La Colombe," down to the widow Godefroid and the numerous followers who surrounded Catherine Théo, were " devotees of Robespierre ". They were only waiting, so the officers thought, for the festival of the " Supreme Being " to proclaim " The Incorruptible's " quasi-supernatural mission and make him the subject of a storm of enthusiasm. This coming festival was the sixth seal about to be removed, for these devotees could not doubt but that Robespierre as Dictator would ensure safety and happiness for his friends.

It is evident that there was more than one point of resemblance between Robespierre's phraseology and that of Catherine Théo. It is also certain that the document found among Chaumette's papers was not forged and that the person described therein merely by the pronoun *He* was powerful, formidable and distrustful, since he did not wish to be mentioned by name, attributes which fitted Robespierre particularly well in the latter part of 1793

and the beginning of 1794. The inquiry about the "Illuminés" also proved that Chateaumont, secretary to the Committee of Public Safety, a body whole-heartedly devoted to Robespierre, was assiduous in his attendance at Catherine Théo's ceremonies. Finally, the deceitful and wary character of Robespierre, who sought to leave nothing to chance and to prepare well beforehand, by small means as well as large, the plans that he had slowly and mysteriously conceived, strengthened still further the theory of Sénar and Héron.

The same could not be said of a certain letter supposed to have been written by, or by order of, Catherine Théo, and at her dictation, to Robespierre, in which the "Mother of God" is reported to call Robespierre "My dear Son", because this letter has never been seen with certainty except by those who have everything to gain by its existence. Likewise, it seems unwarrantable to assert that Robespierre was the god and friend of the "Illuminés" because Dom Gerle, one of their dignitaries, was in possession of a certificate of citizenship written by his hand.

To summarise, neither documents nor facts have proved indubitably the connivance of those who have been called "the devotees of Robespierre" and of Robespierre himself, but it may well be that this connivance existed. Robespierre certainly did not believe in any of the nonsense retailed by Théo; but his nature and experience had taught him that in time of revolution, more than any other, no force is negligible. In any case, the attitude which we shall see him take up in the trial of the "Illuminés" leaves the question open to any and every interpretation.

As to Héron and Sénar, in spite of their ability and the keenness of their desire, they did not succeed in arriving at anything conclusive on that 8th day of May, 1794. Not one of the faithful pronounced the name of Robespierre, not one denied his religion. Héron could do nothing beyond informing the accused that they were

placed under arrest by order of the Committee of General Security as " Instigators of suspicious assemblages ".

The prisoners left and Héron affixed the seals. That same evening the " Mother of God " and those of the faithful who had come to her house on that day were put under lock and key at the former Collège du Plessis which had just been transformed into a prison.

These wholesale arrests effected by the Committee of General Security under the direction of Vadier, without a word to anyone, exacerbated the jealousy and hatred already existent between the Committees of Public Safety and General Security. The festival of the " Supreme Being " on which Robespierre was counting for his final triumph was not going to put things right. Whatever " The Incorruptible " might think, the height of his power was already past and Vadier had not wasted his time in his underhand endeavour to attack Robespierre by ridicule. The president of the Convention was henceforth never entirely to succeed in separating his cause from that of the " Illuminés ", in making the world believe that his " devotees " had neither done nor sought to do anything for him. His prestige was definitely lowered by this farcical affair.

However, in spite of the lively chagrin which he had just experienced, Robespierre continued none the less zealously and carefully his preparations for the festival of the " Supreme Being ". He devoted to it the best part of his time in the last weeks of May and, on the day of the festival itself, the 8th of June, 1794 (the 20th of Prairial, year II, according to the Republican Calendar), he appeared, first thing in the morning, splendidly apparelled at the house of the Duplays. He wished to be the cynosure of all eyes and to relegate his colleagues to the background. He was, even, profoundly annoyed that, on the previous day, Collot d'Herbois had been the victim of attempted assassination : he feared that the sympathy of the crowd would go out to the hero of this episode and that his own popularity would suffer in consequence.

On the morning of June 8th, 1794, Robespierre donned a magnificent violet-blue dress-coat which fitted him like a glove. As belt, he wore a wide sash of tricolour silk, the effect of which was enhanced by his white piqué waistcoat cut in points. Piqué breeches and shot silk stockings completed this brilliant and elegant *ensemble*. The president had taken no less pains with his coiffure than with his clothing. His hair, meticulously curled and powdered, was surmounted by an enormous hat adorned with tall feathers in the national tricolour. Finally, he had even studied and arranged the posture of his left hand. After mature consideration, he had decided that it should be employed the whole day in carrying a bouquet composed of ears of corn, cornflowers and poppies.

After completing his toilet, he was so impatient to show himself to the crowd, to begin his great show-day, that he even went without breakfast, in order to proceed earlier to the place where his power was to be made manifest in the eyes of all beholders.

This place was the amphitheatre which had been arranged at the Tuileries. Here, over an enormous space, chairs had been placed for all the members of the Convention. But, in front of the semi-circles formed by these chairs, a long distance from all the other seats, stood a raised place, luxuriously decorated, and isolated of set purpose. On the top of this elevation was placed the rich and imposing armchair destined for Robespierre.

While all the streets of Paris were seething with the movement of citizens dressed in their Sunday best ; while the air resounded with the blare of trumpets and the beating of drums ; while armed youths reflected the sun from their brilliant uniforms ; while young women and girls dressed all in white added a virginal and moving air to the appearance of the capital, Robespierre left the Duplays' house at about 9 a.m. to walk alone to his post of honour. He was radiant. His face, so often distorted by hate or ambition, was beaming that morning. His very step had changed : it had taken on elasticity and

resilience. Joy radiated from the whole person of the master.

His entry caused a sensation on the terrace of the Tuileries. He took immediate advantage of it to address the crowd. Leaning on the balustrade of the terrace, he spoke with ease and passion to those whom already he regarded as almost his subjects. His voice had gained in volume and assurance and was better heard than ever before. His attitude was at once paternal and dominating. He was cheered to the echo ; the cheers encouraged him and he continued to speak for more than an hour. In accordance with the ceremonial which he himself had arranged, Robespierre, at the end of his speech, was to burn Atheism, represented by an allegorical figure, and let Wisdom appear, victorious over her vanquished enemy.

This part of the performance was so theatrical and artificial that his colleagues, especially those who, together with Vadier, were plotting against him, were moved to mirth and derision. The smoke occasioned by the sacrifice of Atheism, having momentarily clouded the air, these Jacobins and others of his colleagues began to sneer ; one of them even ventured to say out loud :

" Your Wisdom is obscure."

However, at the end of the ceremony Robespierre had recovered all his advantages. He headed the procession which was formed, the other members of the Convention following a good twenty yards behind. Once more, at that moment, Robespierre was the master in the eyes of the crowd. But he had no longer the same assurance as when he left the Duplays' house in the morning. He had been acclaimed, his programme had been carried out in strict accordance with his wishes, he had been the hero of the day, the cult of the " Supreme Being " was established, yet, in spite of everything, he felt no more sure of his power than before the great day.

But he did not intend the result of so many efforts and manœuvres to fall below his expectations. That is why Saint-Just, one of his completely devoted creatures,

demanded a dictator at the meeting of the Convention on the 22nd of Prairial, two days after the festival of the " Supreme Being ".

Robespierre's enemies diverted the Assembly from immediate discussion of this question by bringing forward on the agenda the affair of Catherine Théo and the " devotees of Robespierre ". They were determined to give to this question an importance in which they themselves entirely disbelieved, but with which it must be invested if they were to attain their ends. On the 9th of Messidor, year II, only nineteen days after the festival of the Supreme Being and seventeen after Saint-Just's demand for a dictator, Vadier, insistently and with an assumed air of profound anxiety, exposed to the Convention the machinations of Catherine Théo and the dangers of her sect.

Robespierre was sufficiently disturbed at the prospect of this sitting to decide not to preside at it. On that day he deputed Bréard to occupy the presidential chair. Was it merely because he felt that his enemies sought to compromise him by this affair, or did he fear that the debate might bring to light relations which he had had with the sect ?

Vadier's persuasive and picturesque eloquence carried the Convention with him. The orator having at the end of his speech asked that Catherine Théo and her followers should be sent to the Revolutionary Tribunal and that the public prosecutor should be ordered to search carefully and persistently, and to prosecute implacably all the accomplices " of this great conspiracy ", no matter how high or low their rank, the Convention decreed on the spot, without discussion, all that Vadier desired, and, in addition, ordered the report to be printed, despatched to the armies and all the Communes of the Republic, and six copies to be distributed to each member of the Convention.

No more had been done with the speech, surrounded by so much pomp and preceded by such preparations, that Robespierre had delivered from the terrace of the Tuileries

on the worship of the "Supreme Being". He had arranged everything so as to make his speech the starting point of his ultimate greatness, and lo !, the unexpected and, to a certain extent, fortuitous speech of Vadier provoked the Convention to an outburst of enthusiasm such as Robespierre's own speech had failed to excite !

This fact agitated "The Incorruptible" profoundly. Instead of marching to victory, he felt the ground slipping from under his feet. He determined at all costs to prevent the trial of Catherine Théo, in order that he might either thwart the machinations of his enemies or prevent the truth from emerging. On the very evening of Vadier's success at the Convention, the president of the Assembly declared to the Committee of Public Safety that the affair was absurd and ordered it to be dropped.

Fouquier-Tinville, perturbed about the line he had to take, respectfully pointed out to Robespierre that the Convention's decree compelled him to bring the accused persons to trial. Without further discussion, the man who was still master of the hour enjoined Fouquier-Tinville to hold his peace and kept all the papers relating to the affair.

Fouquier-Tinville, in order to exonerate himself, then rushed to the Committee of General Security which was sitting at the opposite end of the Château of the Tuileries to that where the Committee of Public Safety also sat. On entering, he stated that the Théo case was not going before the Revolutionary Tribunal. The news was as astonishing as it was disappointing to the whole Committee. Vehement protests were heard on all sides, and Vadier as well as his friends asked for explanations. Fouquier-Tinville did not know how to reply without compromising himself in any direction. At last, pressed by questions, frightened by the dissatisfaction roused by the news that he had just brought, he stammered three times : "He—he—he opposes it."

All the members of the Committee of General Security understood at once that *He* was Robespierre. All said

that if the chief opposed, despite the decree of the Convention and Vadier's successful demonstration, the trial of the " Illuminés ", it was because he was one of them. In cheating the executioner of Catherine Théo and her devotees, Robespierre was endeavouring to save his own head. This opinion was confirmed the next day when he refused to show any mercy to the young, ingenuous and charming Cécile Renault, who, but one day before, had risked all to prevent Catherine Théo and her followers from going before the Revolutionary Tribunal. That same evening, the 9th of Messidor, Robespierre had risen in the Jacobin Club to make a hectic speech against the pretensions and accusations of the Committee of General Security. This speech scored a marked success and was much applauded. Thus, in spite of the disapprobation shown by Billaud-Varennes and Collot d'Herbois even in his own Committee of Public Safety, in spite of the manœuvres of Vadier and the Committee of General Security, in spite of the decree of the Convention, the president remained once more master of the situation. The Committee of General Security, baulked of a cleverly-prepared victory, felt itself, for the moment, vanquished anew. But Robespierre did not emerge unscathed from the struggle ; the illegalities that it had cost him were to linger in men's memories, the suspicions awakened were to grow and Thermidor was to remember the " devotees of Robespierre ".

As to Catherine and her followers, they escaped the guillotine, but not imprisonment.

The " Mother of God " sent first to the prison of Plessis, then to the Petite Force, grew weaker and weaker, and after languishing miserably for several months, died at the Petite Force at the beginning of April, 1795.

Dom Gerle, Madame de Tonnelier-Chastenoy, the widow Godefroid, La Colombe, L'Eclaireuse, La Chanteuse and many other " Illuminés ", men and women, united in addressing petition on petition to the government, but for a long time in vain. None of the survivors was set

at liberty before 1795, when France had already been freed for a long time from Robespierre's dictatorship and had avenged, on the 9th and 10th of Thermidor, the bloody and insatiable ambition under which she had trembled from August 1793 to July 1794.

MADAME TALLIEN, PRINCESSE DE CARAMAN-CHIMAY

Thérèsia Cabarrus, who was one day to be christened "Notre Dame de Thermidor" and to exercise a fascination as powerful as it was disturbing over many of the chief actors in the Revolution, was born in Spain on the 31st of July, 1773.

Her father, François Cabarrus, the son of a prominent French merchant in Bayonne, had, by his intelligent enterprise and financial intuition, succeeded in opening a bank, called the Bank of Saint-Charles, in Spain, with a capital of fifteen million piastres, in order to extricate the country from the terrible money difficulties in which it found itself owing to the American War of Independence. Cabarrus, who was the bank's first manager (1782), fell into disgrace for two years, 1790 to 1792, but was soon completely rehabilitated, became minister plenipotentiary of Spain at the Congress of Rastadte, and went to Paris as Spanish ambassador to The Directory on the 8th of June, 1797. Cabarrus, now the Comte François de Cabarrus, was shortly afterwards appointed director of the Spanish Consolidated Bank. Joseph Bonaparte confirmed the Comte de Cabarrus in this office, which he kept until his death, deplored by all, on the 27th of April, 1810.

Although François Cabarrus did not attain his high offices until 1782, his daughter Thérèsia was born in the lap of luxury.

She reacted to it very early. Very early, too, the attraction which dissipation had for her showed itself in an intense love of pleasure and amusement. Madame Cabarrus, whose maiden name was Mademoiselle Galabert, was so worried by this alarming precocity that she

THÉRÈSIA CABARRUS MARQUISE DE FONTENAY, AFTERWARDS MADAME TALLIEN, LATER PRINCESS DE CARAMAN-CHIMAY

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decided to remove her daughter from the dangerous influence of riches and send her to be educated as a boarder at a convent school in Paris. Thérèsia remained some time at this convent, but the nuns, who were even more uneasy than her mother over the young girl's tendencies, soon sent her back to her relations. Madame Cabarrus was, therefore, obliged to keep her daughter with her and complete her education at home. She discharged this duty with care and discernment while trying to arrange a marriage for her at the same time as she was choosing her tutors. Madame Cabarrus thought, indeed, that with a temperament like Thérèsia's, an early marriage would be the best thing.

Events proved her right, for, at the age of fourteen and a half, Thérèsia's beauty and the passion she inspired nearly brought about diplomatic complications.

The wealthy and hospitable French ambassador at Madrid, Monsieur de la Vauguyon, was on the eve of marrying his daughter to the Prince de Listenay. As the fêtes in connection with this brilliant marriage were to take place in Madrid, the prince arrived at that town several weeks before the ceremony in order the better to pay court to Mademoiselle de la Vauguyon. Owing to the important position occupied by François Cabarrus as manager of the Bank of Saint-Charles, coupled with his French origin, the doors of the French Embassy were always open to him and his family. Thérèsia consequently saw the Prince de Listenay almost immediately after his arrival at Madrid, and very often afterwards. The prince fell under the spell of Mademoiselle Cabarrus' charms at first sight and soon let it be known that it was she whom he wanted to marry. Thérèsia, on her side, declared herself to be madly in love with the prince.

All this might have had a very bad ending if Madame Cabarrus had not been able to arrange a marriage between her daughter and the Marquis de Fontenay, *conseiller* of the Parliament at Paris, who happened to be travelling by easy stages to Spain in order to rest from his judi-

cial duties, and perhaps also to console himself for the infidelity of his mistress, a Parisian milliner, with whom he had had a liaison for several years.

The marriage took place in the February of 1788, the young wife being then only fifteen and a half years old. Thérèsia became Marquise de Fontenay, but without evincing the slightest enthusiasm.

It was only necessary to look at Monsieur de Fontenay to understand his young wife's lack of ardour, especially if we remember that Thérèsia was still under the influence of the Prince de Listenay's charming flattery. Small, ill-shaped and awkward, the marquis had round shoulders and a slight stoop, although he was still fairly young. Afflicted with chronically damp hands, a disagreeable manner, slow speech and a mediocre intelligence, he really could not be expected to please.

Thérèsia, on the contrary, was superbly handsome, already, in spite of her extreme youth, in the full bloom of her beauty. Tall, slender, with a supple and graceful figure, it was already plain that she was going to be a conqueror of hearts. Her large, dark, wide-open eyes were soft as velvet, shining like gold, sparkling like diamonds, kind, imperious, angelic and mischievous all at once. Madame de Fontenay's eyes were truly fascinating. But her mouth, smiling, tiny, with delicious curves, embellished with teeth of dazzling whiteness, so small and so pretty, that they hardly seemed real, this mouth which seemed made to invite love, was even more attractive than her eyes. A wealth of glossy-black, curly hair emphasised and made more beautiful the ivory whiteness of her skin. Everything, except one feature, formed a delightful whole in the charming face with its contrasting expressions of passion and good nature. The feature which somewhat detracted from its general charm was her nose. It had neither beauty nor distinction. Too fleshy, and with nostrils too much distended, it gave an impression of gross and violent appetites. She had an obstinate chin. Her silvery and melodious voice was

pure music, which one day was to be a powerful weapon in the armoury of her charms. But most beautiful of all were her magnificent shoulders, finely modelled, voluptuous, warm and caressing to the eye. An air of ease and conquest, and an independent manner, finally gave distinction to the Marquise de Fontenay's original, dazzling and subjugating beauty.

The marquis, notwithstanding his young wife's charms, preferred his mistress to whom he was used and who was more on his level than his haughty, intelligent marquise. Because of this the couple never got on well together, but it was not the fault of the wife in the beginning, whatever may have been said in the matter.

Certain historians have it that at the time of her sojourn in Paris with Monsieur de Fontenay, Thérèsia had already had an opportunity of meeting Tallien, then employed as foreman at some printing works. She is said to have met him at the house of either Lamoth or of Madame Vigée-Lebrun when he called with Rivarol's proofs. The statement seems all the more incredible because Rivarol was not in the habit of receiving his proofs at the houses of his friends, and also it is not a foreman's business to deliver them.

However strained the relations may have been between the marquise and her husband, a son was born to them, but the event failed to lessen the rift between the two : Monsieur and Madame de Fontenay, indeed, would have been divorced in Paris as soon as the revolutionary movement broke the inviolability of the marriage tie if the disturbances in the capital had not alarmed them at the time. They deemed it wiser to retire into the country to discuss their contemplated separation, and so frightened were they that they made up their minds to travel in the same carriage from Paris to Bordeaux. Their son was four years old at the time when Monsieur and Madame Fontenay's divorce was made absolute.

After her divorce Thérèsia went to live with the brother who had settled down in Bordeaux. Here, as in

Paris, or in Spain, her striking beauty set all hearts beating. Edouard de Colbert and Monsieur de Lamoth were the young divorcée's chief admirers at that particular time.

But the hour was near at hand when Madame Cabarrus was to meet the man who was destined to determine the whole course of her life. This man was Tallien. At the beginning of 1794, the Committees of General Security and Public Safety, with the consent of Robespierre, sent Tallien to Bordeaux as commissary of the Convention. These commissaries, whose office was somewhat similar to that of a proconsul, were omnipotent within the region of their jurisdiction. Sent for the purpose of watching the trend of ideas and sentiments among the inhabitants, they were also empowered to make requisitions. It was in order to requisition a part of the silver plate of citizen Cabarrus that Tallien and his men presented themselves at the house of Thérèsia's brother. The young woman herself brought the commissary what he had come for. But her eyes were so lovely and wistful when she handed Tallien these family souvenirs, her whole person made so agreeable an impression in spite of the profound sadness which it was obvious that she was feeling in having to part with these treasures, that Tallien, much moved by her charm and her compliance, left the Cabarruses their silver plate, not however before he had openly declared his passionate admiration for the beautiful mistress of the house.

Tallien left the Cabarruses' house madly in love with Thérèsia. A few days later the *ci-devant* enchantress was arrested and thrown into prison at Bordeaux. Thérèsia was young, passionately in love with life, pleasure, amours and amusements of every sort and kind; so, with her usual courage and audacity, she set to work to try and discover the best way of effecting her release.

At once the prisoner saw again Tallien's troubled eyes, his lips quivering with emotion, his whole frame shaking with passion as he told her she was beautiful. Thérèsia

knew that this passion could not yet have cooled. Thereupon she wrote to him, and the following day Tallien, transported with joy at the thought that the proud citizeness had need of him, dashed off to the prison.

A clear and definite understanding was arrived at between the two. Thérèsia promised Tallien her love in exchange for her liberty, and gave him the assurance that she would prove herself an enthusiastic and ardent Republican. On these conditions Tallien swore to the young woman that she would leave prison as soon as the necessary formalities were completed, and he kept his word. Speaking of this compromise with which many people reproached her, the future Madame Tallien was one day to say:

"When one has to cross a raging torrent one cannot always choose the plank which saves one."

The beautiful Republican was now the active and inspiring collaborator of the commissary of the Convention. She wore daring dresses of scarlet silk and on her head the Phrygian cap, which suited her to perfection, for it set off her magnificent curly hair, making it appear even darker than it was, and threw into relief her face with its intelligent and vivacious expression. Thus clad, Thérèsia made her fiery and clever speeches to the people of Bordeaux from the superb barouche, padded with red silk, which had been presented to her by Tallien. Citizeness Cabarrus was, from the beginning, the triumphant personification of the goddess of Liberty. She also spoke in the clubs where she scored a resounding success. She advised Tallien, and since, gambler though she was, her nature was kind and compassionate, she never ceased to urge her lover along the path of clemency and moderation. She got him to take off the seals, a sign of pardon. She ruled, in fact, and she always used her power for good.

But Tallien and his mistress led too racketing a life at Bordeaux for it to pass unnoticed in Paris. Robes-

pierre, always uneasy where the popularity of others was concerned, feared that Tallien's reputation would be enhanced by the fascination, the enslaving beauty of Thérèsia. So, under the pretext of Tallien's having shown indulgence to the aristocrats and other enemies of the " One and Indivisible " Republic, behaviour which was much more dangerous at Bordeaux than elsewhere, because this town had been the cradle and centre of the Girondist party, he was recalled to the capital of the Convention at the beginning of May, 1794.

The ex-commissary was even compelled to justify his conduct at Bordeaux before the Committees of Public Safety and General Security, while the proconsul Julien was sent to Bordeaux to replace him. Nevertheless the displeasure fomented against Thérèsia's friend seemed to die down, for, on the 19th of May, 1794, Tallien was made president of the Convention.

In order to wreak his revenge on the man who threatened to become his rival, Robespierre had found a simpler and less perilous method which would not involve public justifications. He intended to attack Tallien through his mistress. Thérèsia was not long in following her lover to Paris. In that city their life was neither so brilliant nor so ostentatious as at Bordeaux, but Tallien delighted in the presence of the woman whom he adored. Now on the 12th of Prairial (the 30th of May, 1794) the ex-Marquise de Fontenay was arrested as an aristocrat and thrown into the prison of La Force, until she could be transferred to that of Les Carmes.

On this occasion Tallien was powerless to rescue his beloved, and Thérèsia, though she did not lose hope, was fully aware that for the time being she must resign herself to remaining in prison. This courageous woman displayed admirable high spirits, good temper and complete control of her nerves and of her will. When that charming and brilliant, but very timid and frail little bird, the future Empress Joséphine, joined her there, Thérèsia tried to comfort her with all the affection and

ingenuity, the devotion and perseverance that a tender mother bestows on the most delicate of her daughters.

But the weeks went by and still the ex-Marquise de Fontenay remained in prison. On the morning of the 8th of Thermidor (the 26th of July, 1794) the gaoler who guarded her cell at Les Carmes warned her that she need not make her bed, because she was to sleep at the Conciergerie that night. A little later the chief constable confirmed those tidings.

Then all her youthful vigour, her love of life and her sense of justice rose in revolt in the breast of Thérèsia Cabarrus. She was exasperated that the Assembly, the large number of politicians who disapproved of the butchery demanded by Robespierre, that all France, indeed, did not rise in a body and stop these massacres. Inflamed by her indignation and her love of life, she determined to make Tallien feel what cowards she considered those who tolerated Robespierre's conduct while condemning it in their hearts. This step was, moreover, her last hope of salvation.

"The chief constable has just left," she wrote to Tallien. "He came to tell me that to-morrow I am to go before the Tribunal, which means the scaffold. How different from the dream that I dreamt last night: Robespierre no longer existed and the prison doors were opened; but thanks to your arrant cowardice there will soon be no one left in France to make my dream come true."

The effect that this letter had on Tallien was that of a stinging blow. This woman whom he adored and whose opinion meant more to him than that of the whole Republic put together felt only contempt for him! She believed him incapable of a great or courageous act of any sort or kind! He would not remain under the weight of this affront. He would prove to her that he possessed the virtues which she denied him. Moreover, Robespierre was his enemy, as he was the enemy of all who were in his way. Tallien determined to attack the dictator's

ideas and ambition. He would cast aside the hypocrisy which alone had enabled them to have any intercourse for several months. He would denounce the tyrant's schemes, and if he were vanquished in this terrible hand-to-hand struggle which, as he knew full well, his own safety demanded, quite as much as his love for Thérèsia, he would at least have the satisfaction of knowing that he had thrown everything into the scale to try and save the woman whom he loved best in the world, whom he set above all else, while at the same time his pride would glory in the fact that he died with a *beau geste.*

At last dawn broke on the 9th of Thermidor. On that particular day Robespierre returned to the Assembly, where, under the sway of fear, or according to himself, of illness, he had not appeared for three weeks. "The Incorruptible" experienced a sensation of uneasiness in getting in touch again with the Convention. He sensed displeasure among the deputies, vague plottings against him, intrigues that threatened to enmesh him. When he ascended the tribune his opening speech, delivered under the influence of anxiety, was more hesitating, less eloquent and convincing than ever. Tallien prepared since the previous evening, encouraged by the weakness of Robespierre's speech and his timid demeanour in face of the Assembly, himself dashed to the tribune and proceeded violently to accuse the Jacobin leader.

"I demand," he cried, "that the veil shall be torn off. I see the new Cromwell forming an army, and I have armed myself with a dagger to plunge into his heart, if the Convention lacks the courage to impeach him."

This bold move, these accusatory words, immediately provoked a general tumult in the hall. It was at once seen that the majority were against Robespierre. Soon the words "to the bar! to the bar!", a command that Robespierre should explain his conduct in order that sentence might be passed on him, made themselves heard. The ushers were summoned to arrest the man

who was trying to become dictator, and also his friends. But the ushers declined to obey. They did not venture to raise their hands against the man who for so many months they had looked upon as their master, and who, coolly, composedly and with profound conviction of his sovereign power, had sent to the scaffold all those who had wounded his vanity or checked his ambition. But Robespierre did not recover his *sang-froid*. More and more he lost ground; while Tallien, on the other hand, warmed by his triumphant beginning, worked up, and confident in his victory, now ordered the ushers to arrest not only Maximilien Robespierre, but also his elder brother Joseph Robespierre, Couthon, Saint-Just, Joseph Le Bas, all the best friends of the fallen dictator. On the following day their death at the guillotine avenged the numbers of victims who had been so unjustly and so unnecessarily sacrificed to Maximilien Robespierre's chimerical and ambitious policy.

The news of the fall and death of Robespierre, who had perished along with the fiercest of the Terrorists, his friends, was hailed with frantic delight in Paris and France generally. People felt that they could breathe, come and go at will, enjoy their liberty, free at last of the torturing and all too true nightmare that the words they uttered, the gestures they made, their every act were overheard, criticised, repeated and twisted into calumnies destined to send them next day, perhaps, to the scaffold, together with their nearest and dearest. The reign of the informer, of hate and deliberate and interested lies seemed at an end now that Robespierre was dead.

The joy of living and the desire to work with heart and soul for one's own happiness showed itself anew throughout the country. France, oblivious for the moment of the fact that her financial, military and political situation was parlous, seemed to have become young, fresh, gay and optimistic again.

The general rejoicing had an exceedingly natural result in the affection and gratitude bestowed on the

woman who was the cause of Tallien's initiative on the 9th of Thermidor. It soon became known that behind the Thermidorian reaction stood a woman who had inspired, nay, almost ordered it. It was learned that the woman was young and beautiful, that she had been very unfortunate, and had only just escaped the scaffold herself; that she was kind-hearted, and that even in prison she had been all things to all women, trying to calm the apprehensions, sorrows and anguish of those who possessed less fortitude and courage than herself.

As these delightful reports concerning Thérèsia Cabarrus reached the ears of the people their enthusiasm grew, until she appeared in their eyes the most glorious and sympathetic of heroines. When, therefore, two days after Robespierre's death, on the 12th of Thermidor (the 30th of July, 1784), Tallien's beloved came out of prison she was already "Our Lady of Thermidor!" ("Notre Dame de Thermidor!"). The public took her to its heart and acclaimed her wherever she was recognised. She always remained sympathetic and dear to it.

As to Tallien, his boldness had saved him from the guillotine. Having again become president of the Convention on the evening of the 9th of Thermidor, he had the opportunity of discovering that but for the fall of Robespierre, it was he himself who would have mounted the scaffold on the 10th of Thermidor. His name, indeed, came third on the condemned list. He had, however, been well aware that the danger threatened him almost as nearly as Thérèsia and that it was for both their lives he was fighting on the 9th of Thermidor. Georges Cain, in his *Coins de Paris*, even goes so far as to say that in attacking Robespierre he had no thought at all for France's welfare. "La Patrie for Tallien," he says, "was the woman whom he adored." No doubt she was the chief lever, and Tallien's fear for his own life was the second. Why not concede that his desire to rescue France from the Terror was the third motive which influenced him?

Almost immediately after she came out of prison, Thérèsia Cabarrus married Tallien, and the couple settled down in the delightful "Cottage" ("La Chaumière") in the Cours la Reine, where Thérèsia soon began to entertain on a large scale. But, with common accord, Monsieur and Madame Tallien decided to keep their union a secret. Marriage was at that time in great disfavour, and it was much easier to be mutually helpful if the world remained in ignorance of the tie between them, so they found it wiser and more advantageous to adhere to their resolution.

At this period the beautiful Thérèsia might often be seen gracefully reclining on the pale green cushions of the English barouche which Tallien had given her the day after their marriage, driving through the lovely streets of the capital and going along the promenades. At La Chaumière she received all the prominent people in Paris: journalists, aristocrats who were beginning to return, financiers, stockbrokers of importance, distinguished soldiers and many pretty women not renowned for their shyness.

At these receptions, which she arranged with admirable tact and taste, and always with some original and unexpected touch, Madame Tallien proved a hostess of unwearying amiability, as ingenious as she was active in her readiness to do a service. She wanted her guests to enjoy themselves and to leave no rancour behind when they left. She had the gift of pleasing, and desired to please everyone, women as well as men. Her equable temper aided her dazzling beauty to achieve this wonderful result. The atmosphere of her *salon* at La Chaumière was also brightened by the presence of many young and pretty women. The mistress of the house sought to make each shine in her own particular way. She let them into a thousand little secrets to enhance the loveliness of their eyes, to intensify the attractions of their lips, and to rouse in their admirers whole-hearted enthusiasm.

Among this group of young and charming women one

of the friends whom Madame Tallien liked best was Joséphine Beauharnais, to whom she had become greatly attached when they were together in the Carmelite prison, and on whose behalf she had been very active from the first day that she had come out of prison. There has been so much discussion as to whether it was owing to Thérèsia Cabarrus or not that Joséphine Beauharnais was released on the 16th of Thermidor that it may seem tedious to return to it. But it may be remarked in passing that the release of Madame Beauharnais followed closely on that of Madame Tallien, who was ready to receive Joséphine at La Chaumière as soon as the latter had left Les Carmes.

Madame Beauharnais brought to Madame Tallien's *salon* that exquisite femininity, that captivating grace, that Creole charm which attracted everyone slowly but surely to her and made them her slaves before they were even aware that they were in love with her.

Everything at Madame Tallien's house was so beautiful and pleasant, so brilliant and luxurious ; the master of the house was, at Thérèsia's request, so generous in his favours to their followers, and the young wife spent so lavishly that she was accused of being the patroness of the monopolists and of profiting by their money. In January 1795, Tallien was obliged to ascend the tribune in order to defend her.

" I declare before my colleagues and before the people," he said, " that this woman is my wife. Her misfortunes, her virtues, have made me love and cherish her. She has been persecuted and thrown into prison : one of the tyrant's emissaries who was sent to her said : ' Write, that you know Tallien to be a bad citizen and you shall be set free and given a passport to go to a foreign country.' She spurned this base means of receiving her freedom and did not come out of prison until the 12th of Thermidor.

" This, citizens, this is the woman who is my wife and whom you accuse ! "

But this wife whose virtues Tallien extolled had already

discovered that her husband's resources were limited. Thérèsia's great weakness was spending, and Tallien only possessed the salary that he received from the Convention. One of Tallien's friends, who had been for a long time a frequent visitor at his wife's *salon* and who was generally admired for his ease, his distinction and his air of a *grand seigneur*, had, on the contrary, large sums of money at his command. This friend in his early visits to La Chaumière had paid the most admiring and ardent homage to the sweet and alluring Joséphine Beauharnais. So greatly did he admire the fascinating Creole that he had presented her, so it was said, with the elegant apartment which she occupied at No. 6 in the rue Chantereine. But Joséphine had become Madame Bonaparte in October 1796, and after this marriage Madame Tallien began at last to take more notice of the handsome Vicomte de Barras.

He was at that time forty. Tall, well-made, strong, endowed with an insolent self-conceit, not displeasing to women, he was a distinguished *roué* able to manage the most shady financial affairs and the most complicated love intrigues at one and the same time.

Gradually, the vicomte and the former marquise were more and more drawn to each other. There was more affinity of tastes and of natural culture between the daughter of the late Comte Cabarrus and this bold schemer with so many irons in the fire, who was yet clever and distinguished, than between Thérèsia and the son of one of the Marquis de Bercy's servants whom his master had brought up out of charity.

Soon, Madame Tallien was so enamoured of the marquis that little by little she forsook her husband. The latter, who had always been madly in love with Thérèsia ever since he had been struck dumb by her beauty at their first meeting, fell into a state of the blackest despair. Gloomy, painfully jealous of a man whom he realised he could never defeat, he who had once been the talkative and good-humoured Tallien became the taciturn husband,

the bitter hypochondriac who was absolutely incapable of bearing the knowledge of his misfortune.

In spite of the daughter whom he had had by his wife, Tallien made up his mind to leave home and see whether distance would assuage his grief. Perhaps he also hoped that when he had gone, Thérèsia would feel regret and recall him. Tallien took advantage of Bonaparte's departure to Egypt and asked the general's permission to accompany him in order to write an account of the expedition. Bonaparte acquiesced, and while Tallien explained to his chief how he intended to arrange " The Egyptian Decade ", he was thinking, poor husband, so passionately in love and spurned, only of his wife's beautiful velvety eyes, shining like gold, sparkling like diamonds, and of the warmth of her embraces.

At Paris, Barras, who since the 8th of October, 1785, was the most powerful of the five leading members of the Directory, was at last able to take Madame Tallien to the Luxembourg to share his glory and his pleasures. His entertainments were unrivalled even by the wealthiest, and Madame Tallien immediately became the centre and idol of these fêtes. She was the fairest of the *Merveilleuses*, and the most piquante of the *Muscadines*. No one wore with such grace as she the Greek tunic open at one side to reveal the curve of the leg to all admirers. Moreover, she it was who introduced it and set the fashion. She rivalled the boldest in elegant undress, and reduced the weight of her clothes almost to nothing. Often, her cameos, her shoes and her whole costume weighed less than a pound. She danced better than anyone at a time when all pretty women danced to perfection. She excelled especially in the waltz, which had just been invented, and which was her favourite dance. In short, she was the queen of the Directory and was a success wherever she went : at the supper-parties at the Tivoli and Frascati's as well as at the Luxembourg.

When the Sultan of Turkey paid a visit to the Directory, Madame Tallien wore the crown jewels at the ball

at the Odéan which was given in honour of the foreign potentate.

She looked so beautiful amid the scintillation of all these precious stones that the Sultan preferred to sit out, in order the better to admire her.

Another night, at the Luxembourg, after having been indisputably queen of the ball for several hours, Madame Tallien became aware towards morning that attention was suddenly withdrawn from her. Astonished, she followed the eyes of the crowd, when she perceived that it was the pale and pure Juliette Récamier whose entry had robbed her of her success. Madame Tallien did not hesitate. She had nothing but a simple scarf over her shoulders ; she was certain that if she threw if off she would win back the admiration of the room. She was not deceived in her expectations. Madame Tallien's shoulders were so perfect in shape, texture and colour, in grace and majesty, that when they were seen uncovered the beholders could hardly check their exclamations of admiration and their eyes remained riveted on the wonderful sight which had just been revealed to them.

Every day Barras' magnificent mistress might be seen entering the *salons* of the Luxembourg splendidly undressed. She did not even wear slippers because she had exquisitely shaped feet, and in order to have an opportunity of showing them, she pretended that they had been so badly injured by rats while she was in the prisons of the Terror that she could not bear anything on them but gold bangles. That is why the visitors who thronged the *salons* of the Luxembourg were able to admire her feet encircled with gold and her fingers adorned with rings of great price. She appeared leaning on Barras' arm, who was more and more enamoured of her each day. The vicomte never called his lady-love anything now but Aspasia or his beautiful Athenian, so completely did she identify herself with all the most lovely manners and fashions of Greece.

At Gros-Bois, Barras' estate, where he arranged the

coup d'Etat of Fructidor with Madame Tallien, the entertainments, though different, were as gorgeous and as fascinating. Madame Tallien, with astonishing mastery, organised wild and furious hunts at which the bag of game was enormous.

But Barras was unable to continue to meet Madame Tallien's immense expenditure. The time had come when he could no longer pay so dearly for her favours and influence in order to keep her. So he forced the financier Ouvrard to take over Madame Tallien's expenses as the price of obtaining the position of army contractor.

Ouvrard accepted this odd bargain. Barras had, moreover, not forbidden him to try and gain the fair lady's favours. Ouvrard discovered that this victory was much more difficult to win than he had thought. But he was so wealthy and so enterprising that in the end he succeeded. Henceforth, Madame Tallien had the right to expect everything from the financier's generosity.

While events estranged Tallien more and more from his wife, Bonaparte returned to France, and the former member of the Convention remained in Egypt under the authority of General Ménou. Tallien and Ménou were unable to get on with each other. One day, the general, more dissatisfied with Tallien than he had ever been before, decided to send the journalist back to Paris, warning the government of his return. But in Corsican waters an English brig seized the vessel which was bearing Tallien to France, and it came about that the Man of Thermidor landed in England instead of in his own country.

He was received with acclamation in London. The Whigs entertained him at a magnificent banquet at their club, at the end of which the beautiful Duchess of Devonshire sent him her portrait encircled with diamonds. With the graceful manners of a *seigneur* of the old régime, Tallien returned the diamonds, but kept the portrait.

In 1802, the Peace of Amiens, which was signed between France, England, Spain and Holland, allowed Tallien to

re-enter France, but he was not to recover his happiness there. Nothing that he had desired and hoped for had come to pass. Not only had his wife felt no regret for his absence, but she had almost forgotten him ; if she welcomed his return it was only that she might obtain a divorce as quickly as possible. In that same year, 1802, on the 8th of April the legal ties which united Tallien with Notre Dame de Thermidor were broken.

If Thérèsia hurried on the divorce which would separate her definitely and completely from Tallien, it was because she had a scheme for marriage in her head. Like France, she had learned wisdom under the influence of Bonaparte, so soon to be Napoleon. She wished to forget her thrilling republican exhortations at Bordeaux, her lascivious fêtes at La Chaumière, her resounding and licentious successes at the Luxembourg, her depraved arrangement with Ouvrard, in order to become the respectable and devoted wife of a son of the old nobility.

The man whom she loved and who ardently desired her as wife, despite the protestations of his whole family, was the Prince de Caraman, who some years later, when the death of his uncle made him heir to the property of Chimay in the Austrian Hainault, became the Prince de Caraman-Chimay. He had been an officer in the regiment of the Noailles-Dragoons at the time of the outbreak of the Revolution. The Restoration was to make him Chevalier de Saint-Louis, a colonel in the cavalry and master of the king's wolf-hounds.

The solemn and official marriage of the Prince de Caraman and Thérèsia Cabarrus took place in 1805. Thérèsia was as beautiful as she had ever been ; she was, indeed, only thirty-two ; but the expression of her face and her whole bearing had changed. One felt that the princess wanted to turn over a new leaf. But when Tallien heard of the consummation of this marriage, he observed, with his eyes upon the past : " It is in vain ; she will always be Madame Tallien." He was right. Notre Dame de Thermidor could not be anything else

but Madame Tallien, and many were unaware that she was the Princesse de Caraman-Chimay and many continued to be unaware of it.

But the new princess, faithful to her promises and resolutions, arranged her life on serious and austere lines. She established a workroom for young girls of the poorer class in which more attention was given to souls than to sewing. The hospitality of her husband's castle was thrown open to musicians and artists of the first rank. It was at the Château de Chimay in Hainault that Cherubini composed his famous Mass for three voices. Finally, the Princesse de Caraman-Chimay presented her husband with three sons. Thus Thérèsia was the mother of eight children : the eldest was the son of the Marquis de Fontenay ; the second, the daughter whom she had had by Tallien ; three children, a son and two daughters, had been born to her during Tallien's sojourn in Egypt. And yet these children of various origins loved her with an all-embracing tenderness and whole-hearted devotion. One of them, the son who was born while Tallien was in Egypt, and who, perhaps, was fonder of his mother than any of the others, warned her sorrowfully that people were trying to spread scandals about her by the publication of so-called "memoirs", which she had never written. "It is true, my son," she said to him, "that I have never written any memoirs, but it is also true that even if they confine themselves to the truth they can stir up a great many scandals in regard to me!"

However exemplary Thérèsia's life might be now, the King of Holland, William I, son of the former stadtholder, always refused to receive her at court, which was a real grief to the princess, but she never complained of it to anyone. Always kind, Thérèsia never fostered ill-feeling against anyone, and as formerly, she found one of her greatest pleasures in rendering services to others.

Arsène Houssaye tells an anecdote of the last year of the Princesse de Caraman-Chimay's life, for which he states that he is indebted to one of her sons, and which,

if it be true, proves Tallien to have been right when he remarked that Thérèsia would always remain Madame Tallien.

The princess had gone to spend a couple of days with one of her sons, who was a doctor in Paris. The young man was anxious to take his mother to dine at a fashionable restaurant and afterwards to the theatre of which she had always been fond.

On that particular evening they were performing a play based on a sanguinary episode of the Terror. Just as Thérèsia was entering the box to take her seat, the actor who was impersonating Robespierre appeared on the stage. With slender, bowed figure and powdered hair, slow gait, silent, grave and tragic, he stood, in his blue suit, before the terrified eyes of Thérèsia, bearing so strong a resemblance to the Robespierre whom she had known and who would have sent her to her death on either the 8th or the 9th of Thermidor had it not been for Tallien's victory, that she thought it was he himself come back to life, and fell swooning to the ground. She had just lived over again one of the moments which were still the most vivid of her life. What were the emotions of the Princesse de Caraman-Chimay compared with those which had been experienced by Madame Tallien!

The Princesse de Caraman-Chimay died in 1835 at the Prince's Château at Mennars, near Blois, in the presence of all her children, who were deeply distressed at her loss. She was sixty-two. She died a professed Christian, a loving wife and a devoted mother.

Tallien, lonely and inconsolable at the loss of his adored wife, had a sad and poverty-stricken old age. He was obliged to sell his library in order to live, and this resource being quickly exhausted, he entered the police force where he remained until his death, which took place on the 16th of November, 1820.

MADAME DE TALLEYRAND, PRINCESS OF BENEVENTO

At Tranquehar, the little Danish colony in India, there was born on the 21st of November, 1762, Catherine Noël Worlée, who was one day to become Princess of Benevento.

Her father, Monsieur Worlée, an official of King Louis XV in India, earned, although a Chevalier de Saint-Louis, only just enough to supply his own needs and those of his family. His difficult situation made him welcome the action of George Francis Grand, an official in the English Indian Civil Service, in seeking the hand of Catherine Noël in marriage. Although the girl was at that time only fifteen, Monsieur Worlée hastened to accept Mr. Grand as a son-in-law.

But it was not the financial question only which decided Monsieur Worlée to marry off his daughter so quickly. Catherine was so dazzlingly lovely that her father became uneasy over the admiration which she aroused. She attracted so much attention when she took her walks abroad; so many hearts burned with the desire to make their admiration known to her; so many eyes grew troubled as they gazed into hers, that Monsieur Worlée deemed it wise to put this radiant beauty under the protection of a husband as soon as possible.

Tall and slender, Mademoiselle Worlée moved with the languorous and feline grace of the Creole. She had a brilliant complexion. Her hair, which was curly and the colour of ripe corn, framed her pretty face. Her magnificent blue eyes shone beneath the dark eyebrows which overarched them.

All who saw her were amazed at the girl's beauty and captivated by her nonchalant charm.

Mr. Grand, while fully alive to all his wife's attractions, did not know how to dilate on them to Catherine in the way she wished and expected. Her disappointment very soon estranged Madame Grand from her husband. She looked about her for someone better able than he to render her the homage which her charms commanded. At a ball at Chandernagor at the beginning of November 1778 she was to meet the hero for whom her soul longed.

On that particular evening Madame Grand looked even more beautiful than usual, with that provocative and alluring glint in her eyes which is the result of enjoyment and expectation. She had hardly danced twice when she noticed one of the most distinguished men in the Assembly following her with an admiring and tender gaze. This man was Sir Philip Francis, one of the most charming Englishmen in India. Sir Philip loved feminine beauty as much as Madame Grand thirsted for compliments and homage. They were mutually attracted, danced often together, and on this same evening Sir Philip, intoxicated with Madame Grand's beauty, wrote in his diary on his return home : " Omnia vincit amor : love conquers everything." Madame Grand had been no less fascinated by the Englishman's amiability than he had been with her brilliant and perfect beauty. So, on the 8th of the following December, the young wife, taking advantage of her husband's absence on business, let Sir Philip know that a rope-ladder would be affixed to her bedroom window, to enable him to visit her.

Sir Philip hastened to accept the invitation ; but his joy was so intense that he felt the need to unburden himself first. This was why, before leaving his house, he wrote in that self-same diary, in which, on the night of the ball at Chandernagor, he had written that " love conquers everything ", " To-night I shall play the very deuce in the house of George Francis Grand Esquire."

But things did not turn out quite so smoothly as Sir Philip Francis had anticipated. Mr. Grand's servants, who were devoted to their master, had guessed that their

mistress was preparing to deceive her husband. So they kept a sharp look-out by the lady's windows, but arrived on the spot too late to prevent Sir Philip from climbing into her room. By way of retaliation when the gentleman proceeded to descend the romantic ladder, they laid hold of him and tied him securely to a chair.

The work accomplished, Mr. Grand's servants thought they could now go and find their master, who was only a few miles off, but Sir Philip possessed servants who were quite as devoted as those of his rival. The men who had made him prisoner were hardly out of sight when Sir Philip whistled loudly for his people. His call was heard and Sir Philip's household rushed to the imprudent lover's aid. They soon set the culprit free and left in his place a certain Mr. Shee who had been drawn by curiosity to the scene of the uproar.

Great was Mr. Grand's stupefaction when he perceived Mr. Shee bound to the chair. He knew full well that this man was not his rival and he wondered how the real culprit had been able to escape and leave an innocent man in his place. . . . Unable to solve the problem, the unhappy husband brought the matter before the High Court of Calcutta. The latter found the lovers guilty. Sir Philip Francis was condemned to pay sixty thousand rupees damages to George Francis Grand Esq. as compensation for the wrong he had done him in misconducting himself with Madame Grand.

While the case was being tried, Madame Grand sought shelter with her parents, but hardly was it ended than she hastened to return to Calcutta. Sir Philip, overjoyed at seeing her again, regarded it as an immense favour that she should accept an invitation to stay at his house with Lady Francis, who would be a second mother to her, and himself who was all impatience to show his devotion and friendship.

Sir Philip and Lady Francis always vehemently asserted that none but the purest sentiments of friendship had ever existed between Madame Grand and the man whom

the court at Calcutta had named co-respondent. The friends of the couple thought that this statement did honour to the wifely trust of Lady Francis and to Sir Philip's discretion, but no one believed in the innocence of either the beautiful young woman or her admirer.

Madame Grand remained with Sir Philip from the end of March, 1779, to November, 1780, when she left India to return to Paris. At that time she was lovelier than ever, for to her resplendent beauty was now added the art of using it. She was irresistible.

Paris accorded the radiant new-comer the reception which it reserves for beautiful and not too shy young ladies who choose their circle and their friends with discrimination. She was fêted, sought after, loved and lampooned. A thousand unedifying stories were circulated about her. It is even related that the handsome Edouard Dillon, her lover of a few months, so greatly admired the magnificent blond tresses of his mistress, that he implored the lady to wear only this natural ornament whenever they dined together alone. We learn further that the lovely creature, only too delighted to be able to entertain her lover so cheaply, replied: "You shall have this pleasure, since you like it, not only at dinner, but at luncheon, too!"

It was at this period that Madame Vigée-Lebrun painted Madame Grand's portrait. This portrait is absolutely charming. The face is of exquisite refinement; the chin delicate; the eyes have the candid expression of a child; the whole breathes a sweetness, a modesty and a sensibility, which give the impression that here is portrayed the purest and most loving of young mothers.

But, while Madame Grand gave herself up to the pleasures of the free and voluptuous life of Paris, the drama of political events was rapidly unfolding. After defying the king and continuing their meetings in spite of him, the States-General had first created the National Assembly then, the Constituent Assembly, which super-

seded the king's authority. On the 6th of October, 1789, Louis XVI, with his family, were forced by the mob to leave the palace of Versailles for ever to go and live in the capital under the eye and surveillance of his people. The National Guard, commanded by Monsieur de la Fayette, organised the royal family's life at the Tuileries. Soon Louis XVI and his family, realising that they were semi-captive, attempted to flee in order to recover liberty of action and reach safety. But the people were on the alert and Louis XVI, arrested at Varennes, together with the members of his family and of his little suite, was forcibly brought back to Paris. From that time onwards the struggle was a desperate one between the legislative power, represented by the Assembly on the one hand, and on the other the executive power which was reduced to a minimum and left to the king. The legislative power was impatient to rid itself of this semblance of royalty and stirred up insurrections in Paris in order to precipitate the movement. The most terrible of these riots, which brought about the fall of the monarchy, was that of the 10th of August, 1792. Madame Grand, like all the rest of Paris, experienced its awful effects ; the Swiss in the house which she occupied was massacred before her eyes, and in order to save her liberty and her life, the young woman fled, taking away with her no more than the money contained in her purse.

Forty-eight hours later, this elegant woman of fashion, this refined Parisian *mondaine*, landed at Dover with no other means than this modest stock of money. Never had Madame Grand dreamt that she would find herself in so precarious and depressing a position ! Then this pretty woman, who had never done anything but win admiration and love, gave herself up to the darkest despair ; her beautiful large blue eyes were full of a sadness which her well-bred and distinguished air rendered so engaging that she attracted the notice of a young midshipman, Nathaniel Belchener, who, seized with pity, ventured, despite the strict rules of English etiquette,

to question Madame Grand in the street as to the cause of her grief.

This request was a real relief to the fugitive. It afforded proof that someone was interested in her, and the joy that she felt in consequence loosened her tongue so effectually that she told Nathaniel Belchener in detail all that she had witnessed and suffered on the 10th of August in Paris, and all that she feared in a foreign town where she was stranded without money or friends. "You have a friend at Dover, Madam," Belchener hastened to reply, and at once, in spite of the terrible dangers that menaced the foreigner in France who tried to help the *émigrés*, the future naval officer offered to go to Paris and bring back the gold plate, the jewels and the papers which she had left behind.

Madame Grand accepted the young man's generous offer with enthusiasm, and the next day Belchener, accompanied by a comrade, set out for the French capital. The two young men performed the mission for which they had begged with zeal, intelligence and rapidity. They were able, without attracting attention, to collect Madame Grand's possessions and returned a few days later to Dover, happy and proud at having been successful in their endeavours to help so lovely a creature as their protégée.

Madame Grand could now forget the revolutionary outbreak. She had the wherewithal to wait for better days, and the devotion of Belchener and his young friend made her realise that in England, just as in France, there beat sympathetic and generous hearts. What did Madame Grand ask of these? How did she live her life in exile? All this remains somewhat vague, and it is not until 1798, several years after her return to France, that we meet her again in the full light of day. At this particular period her name was coupled for the first time with that of Talleyrand. How had Madame Grand become acquainted with Talleyrand? Was it just a chance meeting in society, or in truth, as a certain Colmache

relates, because someone in high places amused himself one evening with the bad joke of sending Madame Grand to Talleyrand to ask him for trustworthy information regarding the investment of her money? If we are to believe this anecdote Madame Grand arrived on that particular evening at Talleyrand's house before he had returned home. But the important name of the man who had sent her decided the servants to admit her, despite the absence of their master, and to ask her to await his return. It was very late when Talleyrand reached home and the nocturnal visitor had fallen asleep before the fire. Talleyrand was in an exceedingly bad temper, having lost at play and feeling very tired. So, when his valet mentioned that a lady was waiting to see him, he made a gesture of annoyance and hesitation. However, he went to the salon where the visitor was asleep, and when he beheld her looking, in her sleep, like a lovely child, he was seized with admiration and forgot his headache and money losses as he feasted his eyes on the sight of such a beautiful woman. Maybe, however, the first meeting of Talleyrand and Madame Grand was much more commonplace. Madame Grand received and went out a great deal, so at this particular time she would be well known as she was before her flight from Paris. On the other hand, Talleyrand was minister of foreign affairs and very attentive to all the pretty women in Paris. This man whom the Comtesse Potock represents in 1810 surrounded by women who vied with one another in their efforts to amuse him, of whom the Comte Molé gives us a picture in his memoirs as anxious to stand well with women even in extreme old age, and as much in love as a student in 1815 with the seductive Courlander princess whom he attached to his person by making her to all outward seeming the wife of one of his nephews, could not have been unaware, after the fears of the Terror in 1793 and 1794 had calmed down, of the existence in Paris of so brilliant a woman as Madame Grand.

In this same year of 1798 we have a caricature of Talleyrand wearing a miniature of the beautiful Madame Grand on his breast, the very place where there should have lain the pastoral cross of the former archbishop of Autun. From one of the minister's pockets are falling letters written by Madame Grand to Monsieur de Lambertye, which tends to prove that he was not sufficiently powerful to hold the lady to the exclusion of all others. At that time Talleyrand was very much in love with Madame Grand. She, however, remained lukewarm. It needed the intrusion of political entanglements which removed her from her luxurious life of pleasure and threatened her liberty before fear drove her into Talleyrand's arms.

Embroiled, all unknown to herself, in a serious political matter, Madame Grand was imprisoned, and forthwith implored Talleyrand's intercession on her behalf. The cautious and diplomatic Talleyrand was sufficiently enamoured of her to ignore the danger of compromising himself in an endeavour to succour her.

He addressed a letter to Barras on the 23rd of March, 1798 (the 3rd of Germinal, year VI) :

" Madame Grand has just been arrested as a conspirator. She is the last person in Europe to meddle with matters of this kind. She is an exceedingly beautiful Creole, extremely indolent and the most idle woman that I have ever met. I wish you would use your influence on her behalf ; I am sure that there will not be the shadow of a pretext for refusing to close this little affair which I should be very sorry indeed to see made much of. I love her, and I swear to you as man to man, that never in her life has she meddled, or is she in a position to meddle, in a question of this nature. She is a true Creole, and you know how far-removed this type of woman is from intrigue of any sort.

Greetings and affection,

CHARLES MAURICE TALLEYRAND."

Barras, very willing to grant the prisoner's release for which the Minister of Foreign Affairs begged, immediately submitted the case to his colleagues in order that Talleyrand might be satisfied as quickly as possible. But the directors, with the exception of Barras, were jealous of Talleyrand. They were uneasy over his growing popularity, over his genius for intrigue and dissimulation, and they intended to use the plot in which Madame Grand had been drawn to ruin both him and his mistress. For a moment, the party hostile to Talleyrand seemed as though it would gain the victory. But Barras got his way by obtaining permission to send the details of the affair to the Commissioner of Police, who let it drop.

The doors of Madame Grand's prison were thrown open and the pretty Creole repaid in love all the trouble which Talleyrand had taken on her behalf and the risk which he had run in trying to succour her.

Indeed, in order to remove all obstacles and the possibility of trouble in connection with her liaison with Talleyrand, the young woman obtained the annulment of her marriage with George Francis Grand on the 7th of April, 1798.

From that time onwards, the minister did not hide his feelings for his proud conquest. He went out with her, received with her, and introduced her to his friends. More than that, in the days of the Consulate, when Talleyrand had become the second power in France, the man to whom the diplomats of all Europe paid court and whom lovely women cajoled and flattered even down to sharing his affection for his dog, Jonquil, the admiring lover installed his mistress in his new and florid villa at Neuilly and went to live with her there.

Here, the superb mistress of the house dressed *à la grecque* to receive in Greek fashion Talleyrand's friends. All, on departure, left dazzled by her beauty! The minister was as proud of the blue eyes and golden tresses of his mistress as he was happy in the love which she

lavished on him and of which he, at that time, was the sole possessor.

But sometimes the evenings dragged by the side of this woman whose intellect was not equal to her beauty. No doubt Talleyrand, like Bonaparte, thought that in the case of women, intelligence spoilt love. It has even been declared that some time after the rupture between himself and Madame de Staël and the beginning of his liaison with Madame Grand, he observed: "It is essential to have loved a woman of genius in order to relish the happiness of loving a fool." But it remains none the less true that at the beginning of 1802, the diplomat avoided *tête-à-têtes* with Madame Grand. He was always delighted and proud to see her shine, a beautiful woman among his group of friends, but he dreaded hours of solitude by her side.

It is probable that, if, at this period, a fresh element had not entered into their relations, Talleyrand would gradually have treated Madame Grand as he had treated many others. He would, by degrees, have left the woman who now only appealed to his sense of beauty. But just then, Bonaparte, on the eve of becoming emperor, thought proper to correct the morals of France and more particularly those of his immediate entourage.

His ministers must no longer indulge in "liaisons". Talleyrand, less than anyone, could allow himself this irregularity because, for a long time, he had given deep offence to order and tradition by the unclerical life which he was leading after having been a member of the priesthood!

Bonaparte confided his views to Talleyrand. Indeed, he assumed the tone of a master which admitted of no reply, and made it understood that his intention was irrevocable. Talleyrand was nettled by this conversation. He made up his mind to act exactly contrary and disobey. Since the Consul intended to impose a rule of conduct which affected the intimacy of his private life and forced him to dismiss a woman who was the orna-

ment of his home and the admiration of his friends, he would resist the command. He would stand out against the claims of the arbitrary upstart who wanted to lord it over everyone. He was determined, in short, to take no matter what steps to keep Madame Grand with him, not out of love for her, but from a spirit of independence.

Madame Grand, on her part, feeling the security of what she had believed to be a settled position, menaced, rushed with all speed to Joséphine Bonaparte whom she had known for a very long time, for they had long met in the same world and enjoyed the same pleasures. Moved by the danger which threatened her, Talleyrand's mistress spoke with a fire and persuasiveness which she had never shown before. Her warmth persuaded Joséphine to obtain for her an interview with the First Consul.

Excitement and fear drew from the supplicant a real *cri du cœur* which touched Napoleon. At the end of the interview the First Consul, under the sway of emotion, caused the minister to be informed that he would rather approve a marriage between Madame Grand and himself than a repudiation, but that, in any case, the decision must be made within forty-eight hours. But Talleyrand felt that after all in choosing marriage he was being less obedient than in separating from Madame Grand.

But now that Talleyrand had made up his mind to marry Madame Grand there arose many complicated difficulties. First of all in the eyes of the Church the former archbishop of Autun was still an ecclesiastic sworn to celibacy. On the other hand, the divorce of the 7th of April, 1798, had only quashed Madame Grand's civil marriage. From the Catholic point of view the religious marriage which had united her to George Francis Grand remained binding. How was such a position to be regularised at Rome ? The Concordat signed by Bonaparte on the 11th of November, 1799, with the papacy, imposed recognition of the sovereign

pontiff's decisions. It was from the head of the Catholic world that he must obtain permission for the desired marriage.

A special mission was sent from Paris to Rome to obtain from Pius VII an extraordinary dispensation which was essential for the purpose. Talleyrand feverishly followed the negotiations of this mission. Now that he had made up his mind to marry he was exasperated and humiliated by the obstacles which stood in his path. Parisian society was greatly entertained by his anger and also by Bonaparte's virtuous matrimonial demands.

" Bonaparte wants everyone to marry, even archbishops and cardinals," wrote Madame de Staël to Madame Récamier (the 3rd of May, 1802).

Rome refused to grant the permission sought for, and then Europe, which was taking an interest in this marriage question, found it highly amusing to follow the debates and manœuvres. Soon, the comic side of the incident was emphasised when in that summer of 1802 there arrived in Paris the protagonists in Madame Grand's first exploits in India. First of all, Sir Philip Francis reached the capital. Close upon his heels there followed Mr. Grand and only a few days later the judge who had pronounced judgment in the Grand-Worlée case in the court of Calcutta. The presence of all these individuals in Paris while Madame Grand's chances of a second marriage were being discussed, covered her and Talleyrand with ridicule. Both sought to rid themselves as quickly as possible of these troublesome witnesses. Mr. Grand was the first to be approached. Talleyrand obtained for him the post of councillor of the Regency at the Cape of Good Hope with a salary of twenty thousand florins. But Sir Philip Francis and the judge lingered behind in Paris, and Rome definitely refused to grant Talleyrand anything more than " lay communion", on the 29th of June, 1802.

The First Consul was intensely vexed at this non-

compliance with his wishes ; as for Talleyrand, he was almost ill from rage. So Bonaparte rendered the Pope's resistance ineffective by altering the pontifical brief in his consular *arrêté* of the 20th of August, 1802.

" Citizen Charles Maurice Talleyrand, minister of foreign affairs," it was therein stated, " is by the brief of Pope Pius VII given at St. Peter's in Rome, reinstated in secular and lay life, this decision to take full effect."

Such a resolution filled the court at Rome with dismay and horror. But the Consular Censor did not allow any of these facts to leak out in France. Thus it came about that on the 9th of September, 1802, the marriage contract between the ex-Madame Grand and Charles Maurice Talleyrand, minister of foreign affairs, was drawn up at the town of Neuilly-sur-Seine in the presence of Bonaparte and Joséphine, the consuls Cambacères and Lebrun, the secretary of state, Maret, Talleyrand's brothers and two notaries.

The next day, on the 10th of September, the civil marriage was celebrated at the town hall of the tenth *arrondissement* of Paris, and it is very probable, although the fact is not established, that this civil ceremony was followed by a religious one celebrated in the little church at Epinay in the midst of the valley of Montmorency. So the minister Charles Maurice Talleyrand and Madame Grand were married in spite of the Pope, in spite of the former ties of Catherine Noël Worlée, in spite of all the obstacles which had stood in the way, all the ridicule poured on the affair, all the tears of the dowager Madame de Talleyrand and the disapprobation of the entire social circle to which the minister's family belonged, and even in spite of the perceptible waning of Talleyrand's former love for this woman.

The new Madame Talleyrand was, naturally, extremely elated over her victory. Her most ambitious desires, those, too, which had seemed least capable of realisation, were gratified. As the result of superhuman efforts she had become the legal wife of one of the most powerful

MADAME GRAND, *née* CATHERINE NOËL WORLÉE, AFTERWARDS MADAME DE TALLEYRAND, LATER PRINCESS DE BENEVENTO

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men in Europe. The luxurious life which she loved and into which Talleyrand had plunged her was hers by right of marriage. And she who was forty and had the heavy burden of a past to carry! It is true that she looked no more than twenty-five, but how long would nature remain her accomplice? . . . These reflections caused Madame Talleyrand to bless the lucky star under which she was born and to believe that a future of endless happiness was hers just as surely as the radiant present.

Talleyrand did not share his wife's enthusiasm. He very quickly realised that his world would never pardon his *mésalliance*. The ambassadors' wives treated the upstart to very black looks. Notwithstanding the sumptuous entertainments which Talleyrand gave at the hotel Gallifet, the new-comer was continually made to feel that she was only accepted on sufferance by those who dared not refuse her husband's invitations. Indeed, Madame de Talleyrand seemed to belong still less to the world into which she had pushed herself, after the Consul, now emperor, had restored their titles to the nobility. People were more struck than ever by her lack of real distinction, by her commonplace mind which was devoid of any literary or artistic culture and which was naturally second-rate, by her total ignorance of the refined *savoir vivre* of the old France which was beginning to be revived again: Marie-Antoinette's late reader was making a fortune at Saint-Germain by teaching the young girls of the new society the customs and manners of the monarchy, in order to prepare them to take their places as distinguished women of the Empire.

Napoleon himself passed severe strictures on the Comtesse de Talleyrand for all that she lacked as well as for her too notorious past. Forgetting, or choosing to forget, that he had only himself to blame for such a marriage, he could not forgive Talleyrand for having married Madame Grand, and before long the doors of the court were closed to her.

It has been said that Madame de Talleyrand's own blunder was partly responsible for her ostracism. The minister's wife had gone to the Tuileries to pay her court to the emperor and to renew her friendship with the empress. Circumstances ordained that Napoleon should be standing near enough to the lady to be able to speak to her somewhat confidentially: "I hope, Madame," he said, so the anecdote runs, "that now you have become a great lady, you will put your past behind you and rise to the dignity of your present position." With characteristic lack of *savoir faire*, tact or reflection, Madame de Talleyrand is reported to have replied: "Sire, in this matter I will endeavour to model myself upon the empress."

If those phrases were really exchanged between Napoleon and Madame de Talleyrand it is not difficult to understand that very shortly afterwards her *entrée* to the Tuileries was strictly prohibited by the emperor.

However, the countess easily consoled herself for these measures by multiplying her pleasures and increasing her expenses. But Talleyrand's inordinate pride was so wounded by the emperor's action that he hated both him and Madame de Talleyrand. This was the beginning of that complete change in his feelings, which grew steadily more marked. Each fresh demand on the part of the emperor, each daily affront put on him often quite unconsciously, by his wife, continually hit him on the raw. A day was to come when Talleyrand would reach the end of his tether. Then he would make it his chief delight to be avenged and his vengeance would be terrible. He would cast Madame de Talleyrand far from him and have nothing more to do with her. He would give himself the diabolical pleasure of betraying the emperor and being one of the most powerful factors in his downfall.

Baron Valentin de Varc has written as follows on the subject of Talleyrand's marital and moral sufferings:

" The inscrutable Talleyrand displayed a bold front to the world where his troubles, humiliations and the disappointments of his married life were concerned. He retired within himself and no one received his confidence on the subject ; he did not even choose that readers of his memoirs should discover therein his heart's secret."

And Madame de Rémusat, going still farther, says : " He (Talleyrand) tried to escape from the bitterness of his thoughts by throwing himself into an entirely artificial life. Public affairs helped him ; he devoted his leisure to the gaming table. Never did he run the risk of a *tête-à-tête* with his wife, nor expose himself to the dangers of a solitude which would have caused him to indulge in too many gloomy reflections. Always intent on self-distraction he never sought his couch until he was tired out and sure that sleep would visit his pillow."

Thus Talleyrand very soon tired of his wife, but for a long time he kept up appearances. It must have required much strength of mind to do this on the evening that Népomucène Lemercier came to read one of his new plays at the hotel Gallifet if the story told about the reading be true. Madame de Talleyrand had invited a number of friends for the occasion. Arrayed like a queen, she presided at the party, lending only an inattentive ear to Népomucène Lemercier's explanations ; seeming indeed half asleep, for anything that was not downright frivolous bored her. Before beginning to read his play the author ended his remarks with the words : " Le scène se passe à Lyons." No sooner did she hear these words than the mistress of the house sat up in her arm-chair and, calling aloud to her husband who was at the far end of the salon, exclaimed with a triumphant air : " There, you see, and you would have it that it was pronounced Saône ! " Everyone looked mystified at his neighbour and guessed that Madame

de Talleyrand would have been wiser to hold her tongue. Talleyrand alone understood the allusion. He remembered that a few months previously, while he and his wife were on their honeymoon at Lyons, she had paused on a bridge which they were crossing and asked him the name of the river flowing beneath. He had replied: "The Saône." Whereupon, without giving any thought to the time which it had taken to come from Paris to Lyons and without taking into consideration that the river at Lyons flowed in quite another direction to the river at Paris, she hastily retorted: "Indeed! In Paris it is called the Seine." Her ignorance had so annoyed her husband that he would not even take the trouble to point it out to her. On that particular evening when the dramatist had spoken the sentence which recalled the incident to her mind, Madame de Talleyrand, oblivious of the "se" which it contained, thought that here was a splendid opportunity to let her husband see that he was not always infallible.

Among the numerous anecdotes of the Comtesse de Talleyrand's blunders one with the greatest verisimilitude is that relating to the egyptologist Denon. Talleyrand had invited the scholar to luncheon at his house. Having only too good cause to mistrust his wife's tact, he recommended her to read some of the egyptologist's books, of which he mentioned the titles, before the day of the luncheon, so that she might be able to discuss his works with their guest. Madame de Talleyrand, all obedience, herself visited the library to get the books which her husband had suggested. But she forgot to take with her the list which he had made out and her memory was a total blank on the works in question. So she explained to the librarian that they were written by a man who had lived alone in strange lands and done wonderful things.

The librarian imagining that he recognised in this description the adventures of Robinson Crusoe, gave his customer Daniel Defoe's novel. Perfectly satisfied,

Madame de Talleyrand began to read it as soon as she got home. She found it, indeed, really interesting and finished it before the day of the luncheon given in honour of Denon. On the day in question as the savant approached her to say "How d'you do": "What have you done with Friday?" she said to him. "You should have brought him with you."

In 1806, the emperor created the Comte de Talleyrand Prince of Benevento and the ex-Madame Grand became princess. This event did not cause Talleyrand to regard his wife's faults with any greater indulgence. On the contrary, each day he grew more angry with her for being what she was. A new humiliation which Napoleon was about to inflict on Talleyrand by telling him what he expected of the princess added fuel to the fire.

Napoleon thought that he could easily make the kingdom of Spain a dependency of his empire, and in order to prepare for the realisation of his scheme he obtained in April 1808, by stratagem, the abdication, one after the other, of the King of Spain, Charles IV and of his son, Prince Ferdinand. The two sons of the dethroned king were then sent to France and installed in the magnificent Château of Valençay which belonged to Talleyrand. The emperor's plan was to keep the princes occupied with love-affairs, without any danger to France, in order to turn their thoughts from the Spanish throne. Napoleon's opinion of the Princess of Benevento at once suggested to the emperor that here was the woman to help his scheme forward. That is why he wrote to Talleyrand on the 9th of May, 1808: "You might send Madame de Talleyrand and four or five other pretty women to stay at Valençay. If the Prince of the Asturias falls in love with one or other of them and she can be depended upon, it would not be at all a bad thing." Talleyrand understood very well that the pretty and dependable woman whom the emperor had cast for the secret part was his own wife. The insult was like a lash but he bore it in silence. He sent the

princess and several other pretty women to Valençay and nothing in his reply to the emperor could cause the latter to suspect that he was deeply wounded.

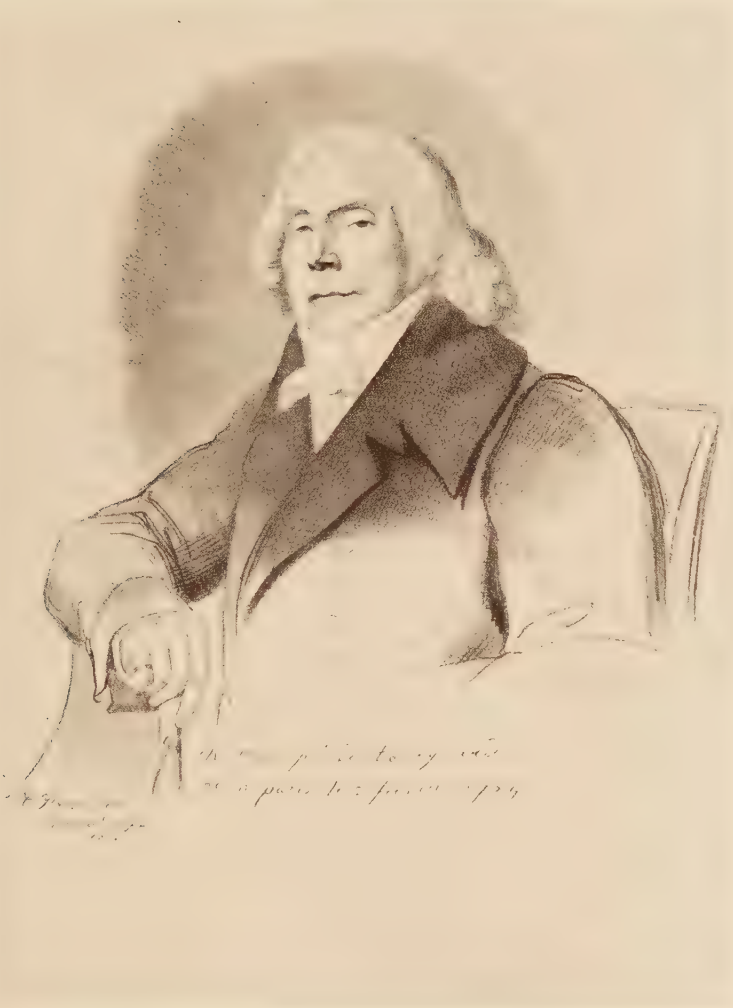
At Valençay, the princess was far from being bored. She did not turn her battery of charms on the Prince of the Asturias, as Napoleon had desired, but she was exceedingly pleasant to the prince's younger brother, the irresistible Don Carlos. Soon the most significant gallantries were exchanged between Don Carlos and the Princess of Benevento.

Talleyrand, informed of what was going on at Valençay, recalled his wife to Paris as quickly as possible. But Don Carlos, who was also at liberty to go to the capital, rushed to Madame de Talleyrand's salon and never missed an opportunity of publishing to the world his passionate love for the dazzlingly beautiful Creole. The relations between the prince and princess became so open that Napoleon, who was far from being annoyed, thought he might joke on the subject with Talleyrand.

"For Your Majesty's honour and mine," interrupted the minister at the very first allusion to the matter, "it is desirable that the princes of the House of Spain should never be mentioned."

The course of Don Carlos' love was arrested by his internment in the castle at Bresse. The Princess of Benevento, who was disconsolate, carried on the most affectionate correspondence with the prisoner. This was more than Talleyrand would put up with. Now that he could, without disobeying his sovereign's commands and without violating the etiquette which regulated the intercourse between the minister and his master, make the princess feel the contempt in which he held her, he overwhelmed her with it. He also begged that henceforth she should not be present where he was. From this time onwards husband and wife scarcely ever lived together.

The princess's place in Talleyrand's house was filled, and a far greater influence exerted over his heart and



CHARLES MAURICE DE TALLEYRAND-PÉRIGORD, PRINCE DE BÉNÉVENT

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mind, by that " delightful Courlander princess " of whom the Comte Molé speaks with such unstinted admiration in his memoirs. Talleyrand had made her his mistress when she was only a girl of seventeen. He married her officially, without intending the union to be consummated further, to his nephew the Comte Edmond de Périgord, in order to keep her under his roof and avoid scandal. It was this fascinating young woman, later to become the Duchesse de Dino, who moved heaven and earth to complete the rupture between the Prince and Princess of Benevento.

But at the time of the restoration of the Bourbons Madame de Talleyrand hoped that her husband would recall her to his side. She knew that the kings wished their subjects to live in a correct manner, and consequently it seemed to her that Talleyrand would, as a matter of course, receive a command to take her back. But in the eyes of the Most Christian king, the marriage of Madame Grand and the former archbishop of Autun had been a double sacrilege. For the glory of God, even the bare memory of it must be destroyed. Ever since the month of May, 1816, the Marquis d'Osmond, French ambassador at London, had been engaged in negotiations to destroy all remaining records of this marriage so that it might be regarded as null and void. Talleyrand left no stone unturned to help the proceedings forward. When these facts came to the ears of the Princess of Benevento she exclaimed :

" I thought the prince too weak ever to dismiss me openly. I did not sufficiently take into account the courage that absence inspires in the breasts of cowards." Reflection, solitude and years of unhappiness had taught her to think and to judge. Fifteen years earlier Madame de Talleyrand would not have been able to form such a judgment.

In 1817 the rupture was official and final. Madame de Talleyrand never recovered from the moral wound caused by the legal and public collapse of her position.

To this suffering were added financial difficulties. From the beginning of 1817 the ex-princess struggled ceaselessly with the urgent need of money, but her former husband turned a deaf ear to her plaints. He, however, lived like a prince in the lap of luxury. "It is nearly noon," writes the Comte de Molé in his memoirs, "before Monsieur de Talleyrand rises. He goes into his salon where his niece, the Duchesse de Dino, awaits him with other ladies, to whose embraces he submits. There are also present his doctor, two or three *valets de chambres* and a certain number of intimate acquaintances who arrive before he is awake. . . ."

His former wife lived alone in straitened circumstances. But sorrow turned her thoughts slowly towards God. The archbishop of Paris himself directed the abandoned wife in her tardy repentance. After she had become reconciled to God, and feeling sick unto death, she sent a message to Talleyrand asking him to come and bid her a last farewell. The prince declined to put himself about or to be upset or bothered in respect of the woman whom he had never forgiven and to whom he had become completely indifferent.

She who was still called Madame de Talleyrand and Princess of Benevento was doomed to die without seeing Talleyrand again. Her death (the 10th of December, 1835) in the presence of the archbishop of Paris was exceedingly edifying, not to say impressive. The Prince of Benevento was at once informed, but the Duchesse de Dino kept the news from him for a whole day lest it should do him harm.

This precaution was, however, unnecessary, for when Talleyrand heard the truth at last, all he said, with an air of satisfaction and in careless tones, was: "This will greatly simplify my position."

PAULINE DE MONTMORIN, COMTESSE DE BEAUMONT

Pauline-Marie-Michelle-Frédérique-Ulrique de Montmorin de Saint-Hérem was born in 1769 into one of the oldest and most aristocratic French families in Auvergne. In 1572 one of her ancestors, François de Montmorin, was governor of Auvergne, and having had orders from the court to massacre every Protestant in Auvergne, had the courage to write to King Charles IX:

"Sire, I have received Your Majesty's command to have all the Protestants in my province put to death. I have too great a respect for Your Majesty not to believe that these letters are forgeries, and if, which God forbid, they really did emanate from Your Majesty, I respect Your Majesty too much to obey them."

The child's father, Armand-Marc Comte de Montmorin de Saint-Hérem, was one of the "*menins*," the six gentlemen attached to the person of the dauphin, father of the future Louis XVI, at the time of Pauline's birth. He had been brought up with the future king, whom he loved as a brother, raised far above himself by reason of the position God had called him to fill. On his accession, Louis XVI appointed the Comte de Montmorin successively minister plenipotentiary to the Elector of Trèves, and then French ambassador in Spain; in 1784, commander-in-chief of Brittany, and in 1787 minister to the crown and secretary of state for foreign affairs in succession to Monsieur de Vergennes, who had died on February the 13th, 1787. The post was fraught with danger and was to cost Monsieur de Montmorin both happiness and life.

The Comte de Montmorin had married in 1767 his cousin, Françoise-Gabrielle de Tanes, mother of our heroine, whose dowry added several estates to her husband's already extensive domains, so that when little Pauline was born, Monsieur de Montmorin was one of the wealthiest landed proprietors in France. He was also among the foremost at court, as well as the Comtesse de Montmorin, lady-in-waiting to Madame Adelaïde, the king's aunt.[1]

Pauline's early years were spent in Auvergne under the care of her paternal and maternal aunts. At the age of eight, she was sent to the royal Abbey of Fontevrault, where the daughters of Louis XV had been educated, with the exception of the three eldest.[2] Mademoiselle de Montmorin de Saint-Hérem left the Abbey of Fontevrault, where the teaching was but mediocre, at the age of thirteen, to finish her education at the princely convent of Panthemont. This convent, where a future empress of France, Joséphine de Beauharnais, was one day to go to be finished and transformed from an all too natural Creole into the most delicious and elegant of women, boasted all that made for the highest and most exquisite distinction. The education given there to the daughters of the high nobility was eminently worldly and brilliant, but it was also intelligent and designed to inculcate refined and elevated tastes. When they left Panthemont, the pupils were by no means learned but carried away the necessary dispositions for becoming so and developing into women of talent and polished manners. No girl was taken unless accompanied by a maid and governess, who lived in the convent with their young mistress. This arrangement allowed the teaching staff of Panthemont to devote themselves entirely to the mind, heart and manners of their pupils without having to

[1] See *Princesses, Ladies and Salonnières of the Reign of Louis XV*, by Thérèse Louis-Latour; chapter on "The Daughters of Louis XV".

[2] *Vol. cit.* Chapter on "Marie Leczinska, Queen of France".

trouble about their material needs. It also spared the convent the rejection of pupils of a class not desired at Panthemont.

Usually the young noblewomen whose families sent them to Panthemont left the convent only to be married. The parents chose the betrothed, whom, in the majority of instances, the girls had never met, and prepared all the details of the marriage ceremony as well as the financial arrangements without consulting their daughters. This was so in the case of Pauline de Montmorin de Saint-Hérem, as it had been in that of almost all her companions who had married before her. Pauline had never seen her husband until she joined him at the altar.

The husband chosen by the Comte and Comtesse de Montmorin de Saint-Hérem for their daughter Pauline was, like Mademoiselle de Montmorin, the child of a *menin* to the father of Louis XVI. The two fathers had learnt the life of the court together and sworn love and devotion to the son of their master. The young man was called Christophe-Armand-Paul-Alexandre, Comte de Beaumont, Marquis d'Auty, and was a year younger than his bride. Heir to a wealthy family of Périgord, he was at that time a lieutenant in the *gardes-françaises*.

The marriage contract between Mademoiselle de Montmorin de Saint-Hérem and the Comte Christophe-Armand de Beaumont, which was drawn up on the 27th of September, 1786, was signed by their Majesties King Louis XVI and Queen Marie-Antoinette. On the following day, September the 28th, the marriage, celebrated in the palace chapel, sealed the union of the young couple.

Unfortunately these two, joined together by the will of their parents and the sanction of the Church, had nothing in common but the marriage bond concerning which neither of them had been consulted.

The young count was weak and violent-tempered. Incapable of pursuing his ends with persistence or firmness, he would fly into a cruel and violent passion

against any obstacle which interposed between him and his desire. At such moments, he was capable of any kind of brutality. Unintelligent and ignorant to boot, he had neither the valour which makes heroes on the battlefield nor the knowledge, wit and judgment essential to success. Nor did he possess the qualities which make for domestic happiness. Selfish, incapable of tenderness, spoiled by a mother who had done nothing but pamper him, he took all the care and attention shown him as a matter of course, and considered it absurd that he should be expected to requite services and kindness with the like. Finally, his manners were bad, sometimes to the point of coarseness.

Pauline de Montmorin, on the other hand, was refinement, delicacy, goodness and distinction personified. She was, as has been said, the true patrician, at once seductive and serious-minded, combining quickness of understanding with warmth of heart. Not yet educated, she was clearly destined to become so, for she was eager to learn and understand. Her artistic temperament and profoundly sensitive nature augured a lofty and intense emotional life. Always concerned with the happiness of others, she never thought of herself until everyone around her was content ; her greatest joy was to give pleasure or do good.

This delicious creature may not have been pretty, but she was irresistible to those who felt the charm of a noble nature, delicate and chastely romantic, coupled with a remarkably penetrating and lucid intelligence. Her mouth especially was piquant and witty ; her eyes, pleasingly almond-shaped, reflected a gentle poetic melancholy ; her brown hair was soft and abundant. Her figure had the easy grace of the thoroughbred.

It needed but a few months for the disappointments and regrets of an ill-assorted union to make their mark on the mind and body of the Comtesse de Beaumont. Delicate from birth, the sufferings of her married life made very rapid further inroads on her vitality. Already

four or five months after her marriage her appearance foreshadowed that almost ethereal being whom the tenderest and most devoted of her friends, the philosopher Joubert, was to describe a few years later as " a fragile creature who seems only to hold to this life by a few ties ever ready to snap and who cannot be loved with impunity ", so great, the philospher should have added, is the affection that Madame de Beaumont's nature inspires in those who learn to know her !

It was not merely difficult but impossible for this couple, so different in character, to share a common life. Pauline made unheard-of efforts to transform her crude young husband, but nothing could effect any improvement. The count never loved either his wife or his home, and less than a year after the marriage he went to live with his parents for an indefinite period.

Happily, the countess cared no more for her husband than he for her, and her father's high position made her at that time one of the leaders of that intellectual and polished society of the last years before the Revolution. Now, this society still retained all the charm of the eighteenth century, but its interests were wider, its *salons* concerned with topics of an ampler scope than those of the first half of the century.[1] It thrilled to the touch of the philosophers, strove to share their humanitarian outlook, and was ruled by intelligence, sympathy and taste. Philosophers found that to frequent it fulfilled their needs and nourished their aspirations.

This circle gave to the Comtesse de Beaumont forgetfulness of petty and irritating troubles as well as the philosophic, literary and social culture which she had only glimpsed at Panthemont and, above all, the chance to make use of those wonderful gifts and capacities with which Nature had endowed her. She was, as it were, the ideal and ethereal inspiration of these unique gather-

[1] See *Princesses, Ladies and Salonnières of the Reign of Louis XV*, by Thérèse Louis-Latour. Chapters on " Madame Geoffrin " and " Mademoiselle de Lespinasse ".

ings where already two societies mingled: enlightened bourgeoisie and liberal aristocracy, each lending to the other its own peculiar qualities. The *fermiers généraux*,[1] who represented nothing but wealth, may sometimes have waited on the wrong side of the door of these *saloñs*, but no man of parts or character ever failed to gain admission.

It was at this period that Madame de Beaumont and Madame de Staël became acquainted, to their mutual esteem, and it was thinking of this time that Madame de Staël, at one of those evenings in 1807 which brought together at Coppet all the distinguished men and agreeable women in Europe, replied to her guests, who asserted that a woman could not be a true friend: "You slander us, gentlemen. When I first entered society I admired and loved a being of the noblest character. I have known none more generous, more prone to gratitude, more passionately feeling. It was a woman; I loved her with my whole being; I would have made her my lifelong friend. This woman was Pauline de Beaumont, the daughter of the unfortunate Montmorin, my father's faithful colleague."

Thus Pauline de Beaumont was the devoted friend, both social and intellectual, of such men as de Trudaine, the abbé Louis and, above all, of that courageous and enlightened character who resembled her in so many ways, François de Pange, who, according to Roederer, "only said things worthy of writing, and only wrote things worthy of doing."

But these years full of enthusiastic hopes, these gatherings animated by real goodwill and minds of fine temper, were destined to be of very short duration. The Comte de Montmorin, who had become, through the exigencies of the times, a convinced Constitutionalist, had come into conflict with the ideas of the king and more particularly with those of the queen. Their Majesties were

[1] See *Princesses, Ladies and Salonnières of the Reign of Louis XV*, by Thérèse Louis-Latour. Chapter on "Madame d'Epinay".

strongly influenced by the counsels which came now from Brussels, now from Coblentz, and each day the minister lost a little of their confidence.

In these circumstances, the count could not retain a post so charged with responsibilities and embarrassing decisions as that of first minister and secretary of state in the France of 1791. He resigned his high offices on the 31st of October, 1791, and retired almost immediately afterwards, accompanied by his family, to his Château of Theil, near Sens, in Burgundy.

Monsieur de Montmorin's departure from the ministry was the signal for an avalanche of attacks and of suspicions as unmerited as they were violent. The family felt at once the menace of terrible misfortunes. But Monsieur de Montmorin, although keenly alive to the danger, would not leave France like so many others and desert his king, to whom in youth he had, as *menin* to his father, Louis XV, sworn love and devotion, and to whom, in spite of the loss of the royal confidence, he remained sincerely attached. The former minister decided, then, to face the storm, whatever might happen, and Pauline felt, with her subtle power of divination, that the hour of bitter trials had struck for her and hers.

From the 23rd of January, 1792, onwards, Monsieur de Montmorin was obliged to show a certificate of place of residence. Almost simultaneously Carra, editor of the *Annales patriotiques*, definitely accused the ex-minister of treason. The Girondist Brissot brought the accusation before the Legislative Assembly and tried to prove it, but without success. In spite of this victory, which could obviously be only temporary, Montmorin's situation remained most precarious. Nevertheless, the ex-minister threw himself with more and more ardour into the task of protecting Louis XVI, whose sovereignty daily lost ground and became more exposed to attack. It has even been asserted that on the 20th of June, 1792, Montmorin went to the Tuileries to take his stand beside the king, hand on sword-hilt and ready to draw in order

to save Louis from the humiliation of donning the red cap.

The life of the royal family had become Monsieur de Montmorin's chief preoccupation. On the eve of the 10th of August, informed, like his friends, Lally, Clermont-Tonnerre, La Tour du Pin, de Molleville and Gouverneur Morris, of the plans for the morrow and the preparations made for their execution, Monsieur de Montmorin went secretly to the Tuileries for the last time to warn the king and his family. Louis refused to see him, and it was Madame Elizabeth alone who received him. To the urgent exhortations of the ex-minister, imploring the princess to leave at once with the royal family, whose departure he and all his friends would screen, Madame Elizabeth replied only by a refusal based on the confidence that the whole royal family, including herself, reposed in the promises made to them by Santerre and Pétion that nothing would happen on the following day.

The next day saw the most formidable insurrection of the Revolution, the end of Louis XVI's monarchy, his imprisonment and that of his whole family.

When the attack on the Tuileries began, Monsieur de Montmorin, warned by the cannon and the tocsin, left his mansion in the rue Plumet on foot, accompanied by his wife and the Comtesse de Beaumont. They sought refuge with the Marquise de Nesle in the rue de Grenelle ; but the ex-minister, not considering himself safe there, left his wife and daughter behind and went to ask assistance from Madame de Nanteuil. This lady and Monsieur de Montmorin decided that the former's nurse, who lived in the rue du Faubourg Saint-Antoine, and who was devoted, body and soul, to the child whom she had suckled, would be in a much better position to hide the ex-minister than would the great lady whom her very name rendered suspect. So Monsieur de Montmorin took refuge with this woman, who tended him with every possible care.

But on the 10th of August the sack of the Tuileries led to the discovery of numerous appeals to the king to save his life written in Montmorin's own hand, many counsels suggested by the former minister's attachment to Louis XVI, and bearing his signature. Much less would have sufficed to determine the arrest of a *ci-devant*, already highly suspect, a man who had been "the tyrant's" minister for several years and under whose ministry "the tyrant" had betrayed the people.

The house in the rue Plumet was placed under seal on the 16th of August, and the same day parties of young Jacobins started to search Paris in the attempt to discover Montmorin's hiding-place.

The Comtesse de Montmorin and Pauline, acquainted with these facts, were a prey to the most cruel suffering. But they had the consolation of communicating through persons of trust with the count, who, hidden all day at the back of a room, never stirred outside except at night to deposit in an agreed place the moving letters that he wrote to his wife and daughter, and to collect others, no less brimful of emotion, written to him by the two unhappy women.

Perhaps this tragic situation might have been prolonged, perhaps Monsieur de Montmorin might even have escaped his enemies, if his protectress had not been as imprudent as she was good. But the welfare of the unfortunate hunted man was the first concern in the mind of this simple, all too generous woman. So she bought for him, with the money furnished by Madame de Nanteuil, the very best of everything that she could find. She carried openly to her workman's flat in the rue de Faubourg Saint-Antoine magnificent poultry, beautiful fruit, the most exorbitantly-priced pâtés and cakes, and this while those around her were crying famine, while the food-shortage deprived many of her neighbours of bread and the price of everything was quadrupled.

Such an anomaly very quickly attracted the attention

of the Jacobins who swarmed in the quarter, and on the 21st of August, 1792, Monsieur de Montmorin was arrested.

In this terrible hour Monsieur de Montmorin thought first and foremost of his wife and daughter, Pauline, whose unhappy marriage had left her without support or protection. He also thought of his son Calixte and of his eldest daughter, Madame de Luzerne, in hiding near Paris, and whose husband had gone to join the army of *émigrés*. Distressed by the plight of these four beloved beings far more than by his own, Monsieur de Montmorin decided, although he had no illusions as to his situation, to fight every step of the battle in defence of life and honour.

Notwithstanding his efforts, the sincerity and clearness of his replies to his accusers on the 31st of August following, the combined committees decided to impeach him. In their summing-up they accused the ex-minister Montmorin " of having kept silent as to the movements and designs of the rebellious princes ". As a result of this sitting Louis XVI's former minister was confined in the dungeons of the Abbey.

The prison doors closed on him on the eve of days far more hideous than the 10th of August. Bad tidings reached Paris from all sides. The French frontiers were menaced. Verdun had capitulated. Longwy was taken, the enemy was within forty leagues of the capital, and the Duke of Brunswick heaped insults on France and the French. The maddened people cried aloud that they had been betrayed and demanded vengeance. Agents from every country in Europe fomented passions which held out prospects of pillage. They told the mob that the imprisoned aristocrats had supplied the enemy with information of which these victories were the fruit. So, on the morning of the 2nd of September, 1792, all the bells in Paris sounded the tocsin as on the 10th of August ; the mob out of hand, and driven alike by the incitement of fanatics who urged it on and by its own fury, took

possession of the prisons, with the fixed purpose of killing the aristocrats who, it was convinced, had plotted against the Fatherland. Danton, the minister of justice, anxious to preserve his popularity, and undecided what line to take, took none and did not interfere with events.

This attitude on the part of the minister made possible the organisation of *sans-culotte* tribunals in all the principal provinces of Paris. The foreigners who had incited the people to this step were left, together with the more violent Jacobins, at the prison gates to cut the throats of the prisoners sent out to them by the *sans-culottes* in session within.

The *sans-culotte* tribunal of the Abbey was presided over by one Maillard, a sort of colossus, a giant, athirst for the blood of all aristocrats. Montmorin was one of the first to be brought before him, his rank marking him out for the favour. But on seeing his judge, the ex-minister protested, observing that he did not recognise the authority of such a person to pass sentence. Then one of Maillard's assistants said to his temporary president: "Citizen president, the crimes of citizen Montmorin are known, but since he declares that his affair is not our business, I demand that he be sent to La Force."—"Yes, yes, to La Force," chorussed all those surrounding Maillard. Now the agreement between the cut-throats at the gate and the *sans-culotte* judges inside was that "To La Force" signified "To death." But Montmorin was naturally ignorant of this mystery. When he heard the words "To La Force" he thought they were yielding to his protests and were going to send him to La Force, to be brought before lawful judges. Then the great nobleman, recovering his tone and manners, said to Maillard: "Citizen president, since this is the title given you here, I beg that you will send for a carriage to convey me to La Force." "You shall have one," coldly retorted Maillard, while he signed to one of his assistants to warn the butchers in the street of the rank

of the prisoner he was sending them. The *sans-culotte* indicated went out to carry the message, and returning almost immediately said: "The carriage is at the door." At these words, Montmorin asked for various articles and souvenirs left in his cell, in order to take them away with him. "They will be sent to you," replied Maillard, and the prisoner was propelled towards the door. The butchers were ready. They dealt their blows with all the ferocity merited, in their eyes, by a devoted minister of "the tyrant". Eight minutes later the Comte de Montmorin had ceased to breathe (the 2nd of September, 1792).

Madame de Montmorin, Madame de Beaumont and Calixte, de Montmorin were spared no detail of this brutal and bloody drama. Overwhelmed and despairing, having lost all that kept them in Paris, they left for Rouen, picking up Madame de la Luzerne on the way. At Rouen, they were taken in by friends. But distance from the place of their misfortune, far from softening their grief, exacerbated it and made them decide to return to Burgundy and ask hospitality of their cousin and neighbour, Monsieur de Sérilly, now that their Château of Theil was under seal as well as the residence in the rue Plumet.

The de Montmorin family spent with the Sérillys in their Château at Passy-sur-Yonne a very sad and despairing winter, mitigated, however, by friendship. The mother, son and two daughters of M. de Montmorin felt, when they had talked of him and of his terrible misfortunes, that their grief and admiration for the dead were shared. But even this bitter respite was to be of short duration.

In the early spring of 1794 a manservant with a grievance informed the provincial commissary of the Convention that Monsieur de Sérilly's brother, Monsieur Mégret d'Etigny, had, on the 10th of August, 1792, being then a field-officer in the *gardes-françaises*, received into his house the Baron de Viomesnil, who had just

been fighting for hours against the people at the Tuileries in defence of the king. The man even added that the baron had been tended with extreme care at Monsieur Mégret d'Etigny's, but that his wounds were too numerous and severe for him to be saved.

This was regarded as an abominable act of treason against the people; but it was impossible to punish Monsieur Mégret d'Etigny as he had emigrated. So vengeance fell on the inmates of the Château at Passy. All the *ci-devants* who lived there, Monsieur and Madame de Sérilly and the four members of the de Montmorin family, received orders to get ready to enter the carriage that would convey them to Paris where they would stand their trial. Immediately after their departure the seals would be affixed to the Château. The victims obeyed, with the single exception of Monsieur de Montmorin's eldest daughter, Madame de la Luzerne, whose brain was already slightly affected by misfortune. Madame de la Luzerne, instead of preparing to depart, attempted, unsuccessfully however, to take poison. So the commissaries lifted her into the carriage by main force. But when these same commissaries observed how frail, thin and pallid was Madame de Beaumont, they were afraid that she would not reach Paris alive and that her death on the way would involve them in a host of difficulties. So they told her that she could remain at Passy. Pauline, however, preferred to go because she was anxious not to leave her mother. She was allowed to get in, but the horses had covered less than four kilometres when the commissaries' fears redoubled, so ill did Madame de Beaumont look. On this occasion they did not trouble to argue with the prisoner. Without warning, they seized her bodily, deposited her by the roadside and lashed the horses into a gallop.

Her agitation and grief, her weakness and the cold which enveloped her, caused Madame de Beaumont to fall down in a faint. When she recovered consciousness she was in a cottage, tumble-down, but off the main

road, well hidden, with by her side a devoted family servant, called Saint-Germain, who, together with her husband, had been in the Montmorins' service from the time when the count was ambassador at Madrid until the 10th of August, 1792. It was through this woman's solicitude that Pauline had been carried to this relatively safe shelter, and it was the Saint-Germains who were now to care for her secretly and convey the necessaries of life to her wretched hovel.

The Comtesse de Beaumont lived for several months in this miserable refuge on the proceeds of the sale of some jewels which she had carried away with her. It was here that she learned of the bloody drama which deprived her of all her family. Summarily tried and condemned to death without exception, the Comtesse de Montmorin, Calixte de Montmorin and Monsieur de Sérilly had been sent to the guillotine, on the same day, and in the same tumbrel, as Madame Elizabeth, sister of Louis XVI (the 10th of May, 1794). Never did their courage fail them for an instant. As each head fell, Calixte, true son of a royal *menin*, cried aloud : " Long live the King ! " But at one moment his voice was choked in his throat : the head that had just fallen was that of Madame de Montmorin.

Neither Madame de Sérilly nor Madame de la Luzerne formed part of this grim convoy, because the Comtesse de Montmorin, taking advantage of a fainting-fit on the part of her cousin, hinted that she was an expectant mother. As for Madame de la Luzerne, more and more distracted and overwhelmed by her trials, she went completely out of her mind and died shortly afterwards in a Paris hospital from an attack of fever.

It seemed as though henceforth Pauline de Beaumont could expect nothing good from life ; that dogged and haunted by her misfortunes she, who was so tender and good, was destined to sink under them unless the Terrorists sought her out in her lonely hovel and thrust her, too, under the executioner's knife. Nevertheless, it was

at this tragic moment, in this destitution which often deprived her of the barest necessities, that her life was to be transformed and irradiated, thanks to the purest, most devoted, inspired and disinterested friendship that man has ever offered to woman.

The philosopher Joubert had learned through public report that the daughter of Louis XVI's last minister, Mademoiselle de Montmorin, Comtesse de Beaumont, was hiding, in poverty and suffering, somewhere in the district, but exactly where no one could say. Joubert searched and ended by discovering Pauline's hiding-place. He himself lived for the greater part of the year at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne, quite close to the cottage which sheltered the Comtesse. Joubert visited her as soon as he knew her place of retreat, and this visit was to mark a red-letter day in her life, for the philosopher perceived at once what an exquisite character, what a subtle mind she possessed. With his thoughtful, discerning mind, his sensitive affectionate nature, his poet's enthusiasm, generous and disinterested, Joubert not only realised at once Pauline de Beaumont's full worth, but furthermore, resolved to promote her welfare in every way suggested by the circumstances and his experience.

Joubert went to see Pauline very often. From his second visit onwards, he set to work to restore her by helping to develop her rare intellectual gifts and wealth of moral qualities. Genius and affection combined to give him understanding of his protégée's fine personality, and the philosopher guided her from that day forth in her reading, thoughts and even plans. Always on the watch to divine her material and intellectual needs as well as the demands of friendship, Joubert was the faithful, noble-minded friend, austere and passionate, the incomparable neighbour who brought more sweetness than any other into the life of the victim of the times.

He often took Pauline to share his domestic life at the side of the young wife whom he had just married ; he discussed with her topical events, current literature, the

soul, friendship, everything which might distract the unhappy woman's thoughts from her troubles and embellish her mind.

Madame de Beaumont, on her side, became useful, and even necessary to Joubert. She increased the philosopher's confidence in himself. She gave him that discreet and judiciary praise which alone was acceptable to Joubert's noble character.

Little by little they became almost indispensable to each other. Joubert's mind seemed to grow dull if Pauline absented herself; Pauline would relapse again into black depression if she remained for any length of time without seeing the philosopher. The first years of this tender and confiding friendship, of these conversations so mutually beneficial, were cloudless.

But soon the course of events brought changes. Pauline de Beaumont early tried to regain possession of her property in order to secure an income. The steps necessary to obtain this restitution called her more and more often to Paris up to the time when a fresh resolution kept her there altogether.

This decision was to obtain a divorce. A few years previously Catholic principles would have prevented her from envisaging such a possibility. But the Terror had shaken her faith. She no longer believed in the God of her fathers, for had such a God existed, she thought, He would not have permitted the countless and unjustifiable crimes of the Terror, nor allowed so many virtuous victims who believed in Him and served Him to mount the scaffold. Emancipated from the beliefs which obliged her to regard marriage as a sacrament joining for ever the two persons whom the Church had united, Pauline had no longer any reason to remain the wife of Monsieur de Beaumont. He had counted for so little in her life, their existences had mingled so slightly, that she considered it more dignified, more honest and much more convenient from the point of view of business to regain complete independence. The activities necessary

to obtain it compelled her to settle in Paris. She looked for a quiet hotel, very moderate in price, but with a good clientèle and appearance. She found it in the rue Saint-Honoré and went to live there.

Pauline could now only correspond with Joubert. They wrote often, long letters without reserve, full of details about the outer as well as the inner life. But these letters, however confiding and rich in detail, did not replace the long intimate talks in Burgundy. On the other hand, the divorce made the desired progress; it was pronounced in June 1800 and was a source of great rejoicing to the two friends. Joubert wrote at once to congratulate the comtesse on being entirely freed from a husband "whom she had never been able either to love or esteem". "Are you really unmarried?" he asked in his desire to hear once again something that he found very pleasant. He added: "If you do not want to be called 'Mademoiselle,' take the name of de Saint-Hérem. A Madame de Saint-Hérem is a veiled Montmorin"—all the Montmorin women for several generations who had taken the veil had indeed borne in their monastic robes the name of de Saint-Hérem. But Pauline, on this occasion, gave no heed to Joubert's advice, and, up to the day of her death, continued to pass as the Comtesse de Beaumont.

After her divorce was pronounced, she succeeded in regaining possession of a part of her property. She then finally settled in a comfortable and pretty flat in the rue Neuve-du-Luxembourg in Paris.

Every evening for two years the Comtesse de Beaumont gathered in her *salon* the most select society which had survived from a bygone France as well as the most eminent minds of the new generation of the Consulate. Every question, those concerning politics, as well as matters literary, psychological, sentimental and artistic, was debated in this little *cénacle*, dimly lighted by a single oil-lamp. The Saint-Germains, husband and wife, had again become the servants of the only living Mont-

morin and, trustworthy, discreet and hardworking as ever, they surrounded their mistress with care and affection. Joubert remained the most esteemed and eagerly looked-for visitor to this *salon*, and Pauline never shone in the full splendour of her gifts except when he was present.

Nevertheless, it was Joubert's best friend, Fontanes, the man of letters, destined under the Empire to become Grand Master of the University, who introduced into Madame de Beaumont's *salon* the man fated to relegate Joubert to second place in the rue Neuve-du-Luxembourg.

The newcomer was thirty-two and bore a great name, but his reputation was still greater than his name: it was René de Chateaubriand. When he first appeared at Madame de Beaumont's Chateaubriand was resplendent with all the glory and subtle enthusiasm following on the appearance of *Atala*. The whole of France and every man of letters in Europe had read and admired it, and Chateaubriand was quite convinced that the encomiums and admiration it evoked were but the bare deserts of his genius. Handsome, with magnificent dark eyes, tender and disquieting, that no woman ever admired with impunity, Chateaubriand aroused passions in feminine hearts at will. Very passionate himself, the true romantic prototype of the sublime or idealised creations with which his imagination peopled the unreal world of romance, he was incessantly the prey and victim of either a love on the wane or one about to begin. A fascinating talker and a very pleasant visitor when he took the trouble, he appeared to Pauline de Beaumont a privileged and unique person whose charm intoxicated her at first sight. Madame de Beaumont at once conceived for him a lively admiration, but a still greater love. It may be said that he took possession of her from the first day when he entered her *salon*. In September 1800 he was paying her two visits a day and each one of them lasted several hours. They fell into the habit of devoting the afternoon to a detailed exchange

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of the story of their childhood, with the secrets, mysteries, impressions, hopes and desires which had characterised them, so that they succeeded in comprehending and loving one another long before their actual meeting. The woman whom for several years past her friends had christened " the swallow " on account of her pure nature, bereavements, lightness and lithe willowy grace, first appeared to René in the past as dainty, timorous, lily-pure in mind and body ; but too sedate and a little stiff under the austere garb of the abbey of Fontevrault. Then he saw her at Panthemont already gayer, more sparkling, more attractive, caressing and already delicately voluptuous as he felt her to be now. She on her side was amazed at the precocious genius which she discovered in the child of Combourg, who understood the soul of the sea, the deep voice of the trees, who could render into words the poetic mournfulness of the shore and inspire in that fair sister, only a year older than himself, an affection the exalted intensity of which had sufficed to make a heroine of Lucille de Chateaubriand. Thus their love was nourished on the past as well as the present and reached an intensity hitherto undreamed of by Pauline. Henceforth she devoted herself entirely to Chateaubriand's fame and happiness. There was nothing that she would not sacrifice to them, and she was proud and happy that the world should know of the passionate liaison between herself and the author of *Atala*. For his sake she forgot her fragile health, the measures which the doctors had enjoined on her, and missed that year her season at Mont Dore in order not to leave Chateaubriand. Both discussed the *Génie du Christianisme* together. Chateaubriand had thought the book almost finished, but since living in the subtly inspired atmosphere of Madame de Beaumont he was no longer satisfied and wished to begin the work anew at her side. This prospect was one of the greatest joys of Pauline's life. She sought out every means of adding to the pleasure, ease and happiness of such a project, and was

thus led to suggest renting a pleasant country place far removed from Paris. Here no importunate visitors could hamper their work; but they would be able to invite real friends at will. Work could be pursued in peace and quietness while they enjoyed the lovely countryside and enjoyed each other's company to the full.

Chateaubriand thought the idea enchanting, and some months later the comtesse took the charming property of Savigny in the Loir-et-Cher, not far from Vendôme. The same day, in a burst of triumphant happiness and youthful ardour, she wrote to Madame de Vintimille what she would not have ventured to tell Joubert for fear of giving him pain: "I shall hear the sound of his voice, I shall see him at work. What joy!" (the 23rd of May, 1801).

Chateaubriand and Pauline made their preparations for departure with the lightheartedness and high spirits of children running away from the school where everything that they like is forbidden. Pauline related all the details of the journey, down to the minutest incidents, to Joubert as soon as she and Chateaubriand arrived at Savigny. So proud and happy was she to have the great man to herself that she seemed to think all that had happened since he was with her of great importance and of equal interest to her friends. The very day after their arrival the lovers started working. She, seized with the same enthusiasm, admiration and affection for the *Génie du Christianisme* as for its author. He, charmed and delighted to be loved in his work as in his person, felt stimulated as never before to write. Pauline had become his muse, the divine voice which inflames the poet and knows not the power he wields. She thought she helped him, especially by copying out quotations, researching and taking notes. In reality it was Pauline's soul that Chateaubriand put into the book: her delicate refinement, her artistic sensibility, her voluptuous subtlety which were to make the religious festivals described in such poetic colours deliciously moving but in

no way to recall the rigidity and precision of Catholic dogma.

The two workers arranged their life at Savigny in the most punctual and regular manner. They had a quick breakfast at eight o'clock in the morning, working then until luncheon, which was partaken at leisure, chatting, arguing and exchanging pretty speeches. After luncheon, they rested awhile, resuming work about four o'clock in the afternoon, when they enjoyed the distraction of a walk which always provided something unforeseen and picturesque, for Chateaubriand and Madame de Beaumont had decided never to take a known path. Each day the walk led in a different direction, and it was the narrowest, most shady and winding lanes which the couple preferred. On their return they would often sit together in the kitchen-garden on the edge of a basin of crystal-clear running water. Both loved to compare this work of man with the works of nature. They talked, interchanged confidences, went back to the subject of their childhood, which they always enjoyed, and did not leave the garden until sundown. In the evening they met again at dinner with a thousand fresh things to talk about and many ideas to discuss on the subject of the *Génie du Christianisme.*

It was only on very rare occasions that friends came to disturb this life of labour and love, of reflection and poetry. But Madame de Beaumont insisted that Joubert should come and taste of it with his wife and their small child. A few other friends paid visits at the kind invitation of the mistress of the house, but such invitations were rare because "The Savage," as Madame de Beaumont sometimes amused herself by calling Chateaubriand since he had acquired such a taste for the solitude of Savigny, preferred *tête-à-têtes* with Pauline to dinner-parties and receptions where he shared her attentions with others.

This sojourn at Savigny was the supreme epoch in Pauline's life, when she was entirely happy, forgot her

troubles and discovered that life, which she had so often wished to leave, was enchanting. Chateaubriand and she passed seven whole months there together, from May to December 1801, and not one of the days seemed to Pauline longer than an hour.

When the great moment of departure arrived it was a great wrench to Chateaubriand's mistress. But the *Génie du Christianisme* was finished ; it was necessary to go to Paris to arrange for its publication. And the fine weather was over ; no more shady lanes, no more lingering on the edge of the basin of running water, no more ardent sunshine to bathe in warmth the house and countryside of Savigny. The leaves were dead, like Pauline de Beaumont's joy. It was clearly time to go, but after the seven months at Savigny the *salon* in the rue Neuve-de-Luxembourg would never again boast the attraction of former years.

However, Pauline settled in once more, summoned her friends, found among the first to return the good Joubert, always her enthusiastic admirer and universal in his kindness, but reserved the place of honour for Chateaubriand whom she continued to envelop with her adoring love. Soon, however, she felt that the adored one was less regular in his visits, less frequent, more *distrait* when he was in the *salon* or ever alone with her, and this occasioned her great grief. She confided in no one, fearing that to confess it would be to give it reality, whereas she desired still to believe that her love rendered her unjust.

But she had been no more than clear-sighted in feeling that Chateaubriand had changed. In spite of his very sincere feelings for his " muse " of the *Génie du Christianisme* the author had been dazzled and fired in 1802 by the sight of the Marquise de Custine, the former friend of his unhappy sister-in-law, the Marquise de Chateaubriand. The Marquise de Custine's beauty was as triumphant, splendid and radiant as Pauline's was ethereal, delicate and fragile. Chateaubriand was too much

of a lover not to be stirred and intoxicated by the contrast. He fell in love with Delphine de Custine at first sight as Pauline de Beaumont had fallen in love with him. Moreover, Chateaubriand, romantic to his fingertips, adored complicated love-affairs which lent themselves to mystery and made him a hero in his own eyes. Thus he tried to carry on at one and the same time his well-controlled, languishing love for the Comtesse de Beaumont and his ardent, hectic passion for the Marquise de Custine. Appointed secretary to the ambassador at Rome at the beginning of the summer of 1803, he found it perfectly natural to ask both women to join him in Italy.

The Marquise de Custine refused. The great and unhappy passion which absorbed Pauline de Beaumont's whole life led her to let Chateaubriand hope that she would make the journey.

In 1803 she was no longer what she had been in 1800 when she had first made René de Chateaubriand's acquaintance. Her health, always infinitely fragile, had been definitely undermined by her great passion and complete neglect of all those precautions that the doctors had persuaded her to take up to the day when she fell in love with Chateaubriand. From that time onwards she completely abandoned any thought of or care for herself, in order that she might devote heart and soul to the man she loved. But far more fatal was the conviction, which she confessed to no one, but which was killing her, that Chateaubriand's love for her had diminished and that he preferred a rival. Her nature was not strong enough to bear such torture and soon an attack of fever was brought on by grief. She became alarmingly thin; coughed a great deal and became a source of anxiety to all her friends, especially the faithful Joubert who longed for her to forget Chateaubriand. She, on the other hand, consented to take care of herself in order to be fit to join him. She returned to Mont Dore where she had not been since 1799, but no longer derived benefit

from the waters. When Joubert saw her again on her return he was appalled by her pallor and weakness.

It was in this pitiable state of health that Pauline set out for Italy at the end of September 1803. She arrived at Milan on the 1st of October. Chateaubriand, detained by his official duties, had been unable to go and meet her himself, but he sent a trusted friend in his stead. This friend looked after her quite as well as Chateaubriand himself would have done, and the latter, moreover, met her at Florence. At sight of the sick woman, so different from what Madame de Beaumont had been on the day of his departure for Italy, when he had said " au revoir " to her, Chateaubriand was on the verge of tears. He controlled himself, however, and manifested a joy that sorrow occasioned by her condition certainly prevented him from feeling. But she was happy to be in Italy with him, smiled at him, smiled at the landscape, and was as sweet and gracious as he had known her in Paris. Nevertheless, the slightest jolt of the carriage brought on an access of coughing and faintness ; the horses had constantly to be reined in to a walk between Florence and Rome.

Arrived in Rome, at last, Chateaubriand installed Madame de Beaumont in a pretty house, shaded by orange-trees and sheltered from the sea winds, which he had had made ready for her. The sight of it and the thought that he had taken so much trouble on her behalf and that he was there now quite close to her, caused a flush of pleasure to mount to the invalid's cheeks. Chateaubriand thought that the air of Italy had already done her good. Several times when the sun was shining and there was no wind he would come and take her for the short drive allowed by the doctor.

But nothing restored Pauline de Beaumont's strength. She realised that she would not recover and was sorry, since René loved her. The malady made unexpected strides and the doctor now forbade the patient to go out. Then she who had inspired *Le Génie du Chris-*

tianisme but who no longer practised her religion since the atrocities of the Terror had thrown her into revolt against it, told Chateaubriand that she desired to return to God and make her confession. Chateaubriand ardently desired her return to the fold. He rushed to fetch a priest and Pauline confessed as in the days of her youth, with simplicity, piety and faith. When she was reconciled with God, she called Chateaubriand to her side and told him that she had sometimes wished to die " in order to be more discreet than her love ". Now that he wept for her, she was sorry to go but she passed away, resigned and submissive, on the 4th of November, 1803, at the age of forty-four.

Chateaubriand's grief was noisy and ostentatious. He caused her to be buried with great pomp and circumstance and erected over her remains in the church of Saint-Louis des François at Rome a magnificent tomb recalling the distinction and grace of the deceased.

Joubert mourned in silence, but long and grievously. His heart heavy with sorrow and his voice choked with tears he said to his friend Fontanes :

" Chateaubriand certainly regrets her as much as I do, but he will miss her less acutely or less long."

DELPHINE DE SABRAN, MARQUISE DE CUSTINE

Never was a child born into the world under happier or more brilliant auspices than Delphine de Sabran.

Her mother was that delightful, witty and clever Comtesse de Sabran whom the court of Louis XV had at first sight christened " Wild Flower " (Fleur des Champs), so engagingly simple and pleasing, so elegant, attractive and charming was she in her beauty as well as in talents and manners.[1]

The father of her child was the intrepid Admiral Comte de Sabran, whose valour and victories were the pride and joy of France, while Louis XV delighted to recall that the count belonged to his family since he was descended from the sister of Marguerite de Provence, wife of Saint-Louis.

When, on March the 18th, 1771, Delphine was born, the household and friends declared the babe a perfect marvel, so pretty and wide-awake was she. The birth, some twenty months later, of a brother, Elzéar de Sabran, was a fresh source of gladness around the cradle of the little girl as well as opening out new prospects of joy and pleasures.

In spite of the death of the admiral in June 1775, at the age of 76, little Delphine de Sabran continued to be one of Fortune's favourites. While her mother retired to the house of Monseigneur de Sabran, the admiral's nephew at Anizi, to mourn her loss, Delphine and her brother profited by the pure air of this magnificent demesne, the liberty afforded by a country life, the delights

[1] See the Chapter on " Eléonore de Manville, Comtesse de Sabran " in *Princesses, Ladies and Salonnières of the Reign of Louis XV*, by Thérèse Louis-Latour.

of the shady trees and the bright flowers, becoming stronger, happier, rosier and more high-spirited every day.

On the return of their mother to Paris, the children found in the wide and pleasant park of the mansion which the Countess had bought in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré, an ideal substitute for the estate at Anizi. Here, happy, lively and free, they continued to romp and play. They had many of their lessons, too, in the park, and Delphine brought up in an atmosphere of tenderness, well-being and artistic culture, lived a life of dream-like happiness. Even the few months spent at a convent in preparation for her first communion were a time of delightful emotions. Had it not been for the ardent affection that she cherished for her mother she would have regretted their quick passage.

But on her return to the rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, she had not only the joy of reunion with this dear and fascinating mother but, soon afterwards, the intense pleasure of learning and rehearsing with her brother the tragedy of Iphigenia in Tauris which they were to act before Louis XVI and Queen Marie-Antoinette at the Duchesse de Polignac's house. The evening of the performance was a red-letter day in Delphine de Sabran's youth. Their Majesties treated the young actors with peculiar kindness and affability. The queen, indeed, was greatly moved by their acting, so much so that she requested a repetition of the performance by the same actors a few days later. This caused a very intoxication of delight, not only to the hostess, but to the brother and sister also. The mother concealed her pleasure, which was none the less great. The 5th of June, 1786, was chosen for the second performance. The entire court and everyone of distinction in the town had asked to be present. The Duchesse de Polignac performed miracles in turning to account every nook and corner in her salons. In short, the throng was immense and the performance scored an unprecedented success. Every-

one was loud in praise of the young artist, whose beauty and brilliance were enhanced by the joy of applause and the passion which she had imparted to Iphigenia's devotion.

The Archduke of Austria, brother to the queen, who was among the audience, insisted on congratulating the heroine of the evening. But Delphine, profoundly embarrassed by this princely attention, fled, blushing, to the opposite end of the room. "The whole party," wrote Madame de Sabran, "were amused at the expense of my little savage who was such a good actress. As she looked so exceedingly lovely I was less disturbed about it than I should otherwise have been. Her youth and *naïveté* won for her the good graces of the whole assembly. They were unanimous in her praise. It made me feel quite young again and never have I found the world more charming."

A few months after this memorable evening the heroine of the triumph united her life with that of the accomplished husband whom the Countess, not without great difficulty, had succeeded in discovering and securing for her daughter. The marriage took place on the 1st of August, 1787, at the splendid residence of Monseigneur de Sabran at Anizi. Armand de Custine, the husband, was nineteen and the most perfect type of old French aristocracy, in valour, distinction and rectitude. He had also a nature so sensitive as to be wounded by the slightest affront and was easily hurt and put out. Maybe it was this sensitiveness which made him too hard on himself and therefore diffident. Tall, slim, pleasing in manners, face, figure and approach, he yet deemed himself much inferior to the brilliant young creature who had become his wife and whom he adored.

Delphine was at that time in her seventeenth year, dazzling in the freshness and exuberance of her youth. Her complexion of milk and roses vied in splendour and delicacy with the purest and loveliest flowers of spring. There was something subjugating and radiant about her

whole person which compelled admiration and quite naturally caused her mother's friend, the Chevalier de Boufflers, to christen her "Queen of the Roses" (*La Reine des Roses*). Never was a nickname more apt or better deserved. Delphine de Sabran rejuvenated and irradiated everything that she approached. And yet the predominant trait in her expression was candour. Her lovely dark blue eyes, happy child-like smile kindled by the allurement of pleasure, her pretty forehead which betokened the artist: all these charms were ingenuous, simple and appealing, while the magnificent golden tresses framing the lovely oval of her face gave this young bride the air of one of the admirable portraits of the Venetian school. Yet passion might be divined beneath her candour, and the springs of sadness beneath her gaiety.

However, the marriage festivities were as gay as they were picturesque. Monseigneur de Sabran wished all his peasantry to take part in them, so that noble lords and shepherdesses danced together in the shade of the green trees of Anizi and sat down to the same banquet.

During the evening an incident as unexpected as it was touching preceded the union of the young couple and caused Madame de Sabran to write to the Chevalier de Boufflers:

"Some day, in the chimney corner, I will tell you about a little scene which will make you laugh: of how I was obliged to whisper into the father's ear what he then went and whispered into his son's. Never in my life have I felt more embarrassed. I don't believe my blushes will have died down by to-morrow!"

The next day the happy pair left Anizi and went to instal themselves in the comfortable and luxurious house which General de Custine had given to Armand on the occasion of his marriage with Delphine. This house, situated not far from Metz, was near the factory which

the de Custines owned at Nidervilers and which Armand was now to manage and supervise.

At Nidervilers the life of the young couple was ideally tender and domestic. Madame de Sabran, who went to see her children after they had settled in, wrote on her return : " I found my two little turtle-doves billing and cooing in the prettiest manner imaginable."

Delphine surrounded her husband with the most attentive and devoted affection. True, Madame de Sabran suspected her of managing her dear Armand a little even while she cajoled and aided him ; but the young wife's ascendancy was disguised under so much tenderness, solicitude and love that her husband was grateful to her for assuming rights over him. Every day his admiration for his beautiful Delphine increased and his love became stronger. Both at that time would have been perfectly happy had Delphine not already begun to fret over not being a mother or about to become one. In vain Armand pointed out that she was very young and had every reason to hope. Delphine was afraid, and sometimes even wept. Her natural ardour and impetuosity could not endure to wait. She determined to ask for a son from Notre Dame de Liesse, who, she declared, never turned a deaf ear to the queens of France when they made this petition.

Armand could refuse his adored young wife nothing and a pilgrimage to the miraculous Virgin was arranged. On a rainy morning in the early spring of 1788, Armand and Delphine, accompanied by Madame de Sabran and Elzéar, and followed by an ass laden with provisions, set out on foot to Notre Dame de Liesse. They stopped the night on the way, taking the road again the following morning with renewed ardour. On reaching Notre Dame de Liesse the whole family made their communion and ten months later Delphine gave birth to Gaston de Custine. This longed-for son was destined to live only until 1792 ; but early in 1793 Delphine gave birth to another boy, who received the name of Astolphe.

At this particular time, Armand and Delphine were not living at Nidervilers. Their friends had urged them to return to Paris and under the influence of his young wife, Armand had yielded, but sadly, with a heart full of foreboding. Delphine, on the contrary, was glad to return to the animation of Paris, to rejoin her friends in their round of gaiety and to live the active life for which the quietness of the provinces had made her thirst.

When the young people returned to the capital Delphine was twenty and lovelier than ever before. Her freshness, her lovely hair, her charm, her grace, were at the height of their perfection, so that she at once scored a dazzling social success. She was the subject of immense flattery and could not remain indifferent to compliments. A born coquette, she became even more so, seeking praise, especially from men, blinding herself to the fact that her conduct might be wounding to her husband. She was, moreover, still devoted to Armand, but she could not see why this wifely love should prevent her from having admirers like her friends.

Armand de Custine's refined, delicate and sensitive nature could not endure the sight of Delphine smiling at other men as sweetly as she smiled at him. He suffered to find himself no longer the beginning, middle and end of his charming and beloved wife's thoughts and plans, at living a life so different from that which had made their happiness at Nidervilers. Delphine's coquetries, her intense love of pleasure, the constant need for amusement which characterised during the year 1790 the liberal aristocracy which had immediately joined the first revolutionary movements although both alike were destined to perish in the Terror, all those impetuous and unexpected manifestations were to Armand de Custine a cause of acute and profound suffering. But he made no complaint. Wounded, he retired within himself, no longer enveloping his wife in looks of tender love and devotion ; he grew more and more silent, lived more and more alone and gradually

became a stranger to the life led by the woman whom, nevertheless, he passionately loved.

Delphine, who considered herself entirely free from blame, was hurt at no longer receiving from her husband the demonstrations of tenderness to which he had accustomed her. She found him capricious and unjust. Then she sulked and redoubled her coquetry. Thus husband and wife drifted farther and farther apart, and Armand, in order to ease his pain and forget, resolved to enter the army and was accepted as aide-de-camp to General Lükner.

When Armand's project had become a reality and his resolution irrevocable, he communicated it to Delphine. Between these two hearts that had beaten so completely in unison for three years and felt so deeply the sense of one another's worth there was a moment of poignant emotion. Each bitterly regretted the blundering that had lost them their great treasure of happiness ; husband and wife fell into each other's arms and mingled their tears.

But it was too late to draw back ; Armand's papers were signed and Delphine had promised her friends to be present at the approaching festivities. Moreover, the " Queen of the Roses ", while all-powerful in Paris on account of her beauty, had no influence at all with the army, either to obtain permission to follow her husband, or to secure his exemption from active service. The inevitable must be accomplished, and the " two turtle-doves " of Nidervilers separated in a time full of menaces and hints of the unknown. The minds of both were traversed by a kind of presentiment ; they drew closer together, clasping one another as though in mutual defence against a danger which they guessed rather than knew. The three days before Armand's departure were sad, sometimes to the point of anguish. Delphine, as of yore, often hid her pretty golden head on her husband's shoulder, but both were saying to themselves : the day after to-morrow, to-morrow, vast distances will

stretch between us and we shall share nothing but our memories. . . .

When Armand gave Delphine his farewell kiss the young wife all but swooned, and when he was already far away her tear-dimmed eyes still strained to catch on the horizon the fine and martial silhouette of the young aide-de-camp who had been to her the best of husbands and the most devoted of men.

The days that followed his departure were dull and oppressive. The solitary wife recalled the past and longed for the speedy return of her absent loved one. She even wrote in her little diary : " I will put absolutely everything aside and live only for him I love."

But, all unconsciously, the energetic and ardent nature of the " Queen of Roses " reacted against the state of prostration in which her husband's departure had left her. Friends, too, strove to win her back again, especially the Comtesse Alexandre de La Rochefoucauld and the Marquise de Chateaubriand, wife of the elder brother of René de Chateaubriand. These two needed Delphine as confidante of their love-affairs and associate in their sentimental mysteries. Gradually they enticed Madame de Custine from her solitude and soon the old life began again ; a life of balls, of love, of heedlessness, in which four admirers whom Delphine kept at a respectful distance, endeavoured to make her forget that she mourned a husband who had gone to fight for his country. These four lovers were Antoine de Lévis, the Chevalier de Fontanges, Monsieur d'Esterno and Monsieur de Moges. Delphine also received the confidences of the young men in love with Madame de La Rochefoucauld, with regard to one of whom, indeed, it occurred to her that it would be pleasant were he to realise that she was young and pretty and did not look at all like a duenna.

But the superficial and frivolous life of this young, aristocratic, philosophic and philanthropic France, never more active and absorbing in Paris than in 1790, suffered

in the early months of 1791 from the repercussions of political events. As the struggle between the Assembly and the monarchy became more bitter, so the uneasiness of the aristocracy which had rallied to the idea of reform increased. Soon they became suspect in the eyes of the revolutionaries, and the brilliant society of which Delphine de Custine was one of the queens dispersed far from Paris. Some of its members went abroad, while others withdrew to the provinces.

Delphine, accompanied by little Astolphe, her only surviving son, and Nanette, the child's nurse, went to instal herself in the Duchesse de La Rochefoucauld's château for two months (January, 1793) and later accompanied her sister-in-law, Madame de Dreux-Brézé, to les Andelys in Normandy. Here she lived a peaceful and simple life, seeking, like her gay friends of 1790, only to be forgotten. At that time Madame de Sabran, her mother, was already in Prussia with Elzéar de Sabran. She had left Paris in the month of May, 1791, on the urgent advice of Monseigneur de Sabran who was convinced that Elzéar's life was in serious danger there.[1]

But the de Custines, Armand and his father, continued to serve the Revolution and the new ideas. Adam-Philippe, Comte de Custine, Delphine's father-in-law, had been elected deputy for the nobility in the States General, by the bailiwick of Metz, and had immediately taken his place amongst the small minority of nobles who held liberal views. In 1792 General de Custine had been sent to the Army of the Rhine where he had gloriously defended Landau, and after a short command in the camp at Soissons he had replaced the Maréchal de Lückner. In this position Custine had seized Worms, Mainz and Frankfort (October, 1792). Paris and the extremists were at that time in a state of ferment. The revolutionaries saw traitors in all the old *ci-devants*. The mas-

[1] See the Chapter on "Eléonore de Jean de Manville, Comtesse de Sabran", in *Princesses, Ladies and Salonnières of the Reign of Louis XV*, by Thérèse Louis-Latour.

sacres of the 2nd and 5th of September, 1792, in which the 1,089 killed comprised more than seven hundred nobles, testified to the fear of the *sans-culottes* as much as to their cruelty. It was just at the height of this outburst against the aristocracy that that former *ci-devant*, General de Custine, suffered a check in Franconia. Forced to retire on the left bank of the Rhine he lost Mainz. Although he was given the command of the northern army after this reverse, he was, after the loss of Mainz, suspected of treason by the revolutionaries. At the first denunciation he was recalled, arrested, imprisoned and finally arraigned before the Revolutionary Tribunal (August, 1793).

It was in her Normandy retreat that Delphine learned of her father-in-law's arrest and of the accusations hanging over him. Like the brave woman she was, she did not hesitate for a second to seek out the general and offer him the comfort and consolation of her affectionate devotion. Assisted by Nanette, she hastily packed, leaving Astolphe and his nurse at les Andelys under the care of Armand's sister, Madame de Dreux-Brézé.

Delphine found her father-in-law in the Conciergerie. There he occupied the most dismal of cells, that which was to be assigned to Marie-Antoinette after the failure of the white carnation conspiracy. This cell was only lighted from the women's courtyard, itself so dark. In this minute and gloomy cell, the general, a prey to the fury aroused in him by the injustice of which he found himself the victim, paced violently up and down, pouring forth a flood of passionate speech. He was like a caged lion whose life had been spared by the hunters so that they might enjoy the spectacle of his mighty rage.

But Delphine entered this place of torture with her radiant beauty, her tender, valiant smile and the unshakable desire to be his joy and consolation during this terrible time of trial. Her courage made her reposeful, her beauty was benignant ; she had grown taller, love-

lier, and there was something so sympathetic, so devoted in her fascination that at the very sight of her the general was calmed and comforted. He ran to this daughter by adoption, embracing her with all the passion of a grateful and intensely admiring father; then listened to her soothing and encouraging words. He determined now to follow her sensible and loving advice. Her persuasive voice convinced and transformed him, her pure and lovely blue eyes brought refreshment. His daughter-in-law's dignified bearing, reminiscent of the lofty-minded Admiral de Sabran and the high lineage relating Madame de Custine to Saint-Louis, impressed the calumniated general to such a degree as to restore the self-control of which anger had robbed him.

Every day Delphine returned to pursue her mission of consolation and love, and when the unjust trial of the man whose valour and devotion to his country had always been unbounded, began on the 15th of August, 1793, she begged the dangerous favour of sitting at the side of the accused as long as the pleading lasted.

During these days of hideous suffering, Delphine's life was her father-in-law's. She was the first to arrive at the judgment hall, and sat in such a way that when the general arrived she would be at his feet. Thus he could see the loving expression of her face, her beautiful refreshing eyes, her whole being absorbed in the defence, which they pursued together.

Thus encouraged and sustained, the general defended himself with skill and spirit. His apt replies and the stir created by Delphine's beauty and devotion set up a current of sympathy for the accused. Hébert, who presided at the hearings, perceived it and was consumed with rage, for he feared lest this sympathy should influence the judges' sentence. Thus he exclaimed, in a burst of violent hatred:

"Do not let yourselves be led away by the lovely eyes of the traitor's daughter: both he and she are your enemies and those of your fatherland."

Hébert in concert with Fouquier-Tinville went yet further. These two men sought to get rid of Madame de Custine by assassination in order that they might have nothing more to fear from her influence. Ever since the September massacres Paris had had its " Septembrisseurs " who had acquired a taste for assassination and were ready, for a modest price, to deliver men from the power of their enemies. It was these men whom Hébert and Fouquier-Tinville caused to be approached and paid to assassinate Madame de Custine when she left the Palais de Justice. The day chosen for the execution of this project happened to be just one of those when Delphine's influence had been more apparent and profound than usual. At one moment of the trial it had sufficed for her to glance with her expression of touching distress at the women in the galleries, to make them burst into sobs and tears.

But when at the close of that day's sitting Madame de Custine left the Palais de Justice and moved towards the steps which she had to descend in order to enter the side street where her carriage awaited her, she sensed the crowd's hostility and realised that a plot had been hatched against her. At that moment her life was at the mercy of the slightest blunder, of the smallest hesitation as to the best course to pursue. Delphine saw in front of her naked sword-blades in the hands of bloodthirsty men ; she heard on all sides the words : " Here comes la Custine the traitor's daughter-in-law ! " If she were to go up to these men and brave the crowd she would be lost. Her heart beat so fast and violently that she felt everything swim around her. But strong and marvellously calm in spite of her intense agitation the general's daughter-in-law took the one step that would save her. Seeing a woman of the people who held a young child in her arms she went up to her and said in her sweetest tones as she caressed the baby : " What a pretty little thing ! "—" Take him," rejoined the mother, touched, " he will save you. I will come and fetch him down

below." Delphine, with motherly tenderness, took the child from the working woman, held it in a long embrace, clasped it in her arms and, protected by this fragile burden, walked slowly and steadily down the steps of the court in the midst of that mob suddenly softened by the sight of a mother with a babe. Madame de Custine's presence of mind had saved her. On reaching the little street she restored the child with warm thanks to its mother and entered the waiting carriage which was to bring her once more on the following day to perform her mission of self-devotion.

Thus during the thirteen days of the general's trial Delphine faced danger with a light heart, filled with the desire to be of use to Armand's father. On the 28th of August at nine o'clock in the evening after a sitting of twelve hours the general was declared guilty of high treason, condemned to death, and to have all his goods confiscated by the Republic.

"My conscience has nothing to reproach me with," he said. "I die calmly, an innocent man."

Delphine obtained permission to see the general for the last time on the evening of his condemnation. He had been moved to another cell because the one he occupied was needed for Marie-Antoinette. "They have taken my cell for the queen," said the Marquis de Custine to his daughter-in-law, "because there is not another so bad in the whole prison!"

After his daughter-in-law's departure, the general wrote to his son:

"Farewell, my son, farewell! Do not forget your father who watches the approach of death with serenity. I have but one regret, it is to leave you a name that my sentence may cause some of the credulous to consider besmirched by treason. Clear my memory as soon as you can. If you are able to get possession of my letters this will be easy. Live for your dear wife and for your sister whom I embrace. Love one another. I think

that I shall be able to view my last hour with calm. Once more farewell,

Your father and friend,

CUSTINE.

28th of August, 1793, ten p.m."

In order to make sure of the sincerity of this letter and of how far the whole family of de Custine was above treason of any kind, the reader should see, in the first volume of *La Revue historique de l'année* 1876, the essay by A. Sorel entitled : " La Mission de Custine à Brunswick."

On the 29th of August at a quarter past ten in the morning the general mounted the tumbrel that bore him to the Place de la Révolution. Delphine had written to him that morning for the last time, but the Marquis de Custine abstained from reading the letter in order to preserve his calm. On arriving at the place of execution, he mounted the scaffold with a firm step, dying as bravely as he had lived (the 29th of August, 1793).

But the misfortunes of Admiral de Sabran's courageous daughter were far from being ended by the death of her father-in-law. After this a series of tragic events overtook her and hers. Armand had understood the appeal in his father's last letter. The general asked his son to clear their name from all stain as soon as he could. Armand desired to accomplish this filial duty immediately.

The week after his father's execution he caused bills to be posted throughout Paris proclaiming General Comte de Custine's innocence. This resulted in Armand's arrest at the end of August, 1793. He was imprisoned in La Force and Delphine resumed once more her recently relinquished mission of comforting the sorrowful. Brave and courageous as ever, the young marquise ignored the dangers she incurred. On October the 18th, 1793, she wrote to her brother Elzéar, to whom she opened her heart freely : " My one consolation is my supernatural strength. I fear nothing and I prepare for

everything with calmness and fortitude. Do you remember when a fly once frightened me? It would take a very great deal more than that now. I think this courage is due rather to my distaste of life than to any other reason. Farewell, my brother, whose heart beats as one with mine."

Every day Delphine spent long hours in the prison of La Force with her husband. She was devoted and affectionate, but the emotions of those happy days at Nidervilers did not return. Delphine had been too much spoilt by society, her triumphant beauty had gained for her success and homages too numerous and varied for the estrangement which had separated Armand and her for years not to leave an ineffaceable mark on her passionate nature. Armand's reserve, his lack of exuberance, his cold exterior constrained and wounded Delphine's fiery soul. It was impossible for her to feel again the old love for her husband, although he loved her now more deeply than ever before. She explained her feelings in a letter written to her brother in the December of 1793.

"With regard to Armand," she said, "although for a long time we have, for serious reasons, been entirely cold to one another, although we have lived apart, our recent misfortunes have re-united us. My complete devotion to him and those who were dear to him has touched his heart and made him more in love with me than he has ever been. But I, to his despair, can feel for him nothing more than the warmest sympathy."

So the young officer, afflicted by the death of his father, distressed at not finding his wife as he had first known her, overwhelmed by his imprisonment, the confiscation of their estates and the menace of death hanging over him, lived isolated and melancholy in La Force, even when Delphine was with him.

But although Delphine's love for her husband was no longer that of an enamoured wife, she was as assiduous and devoted to him as to the general. She earnestly

desired his safety, and so soon as she joyfully glimpsed the means of assuring it, was ready to expose herself to danger if necessary.

In her daily visits to her husband in La Force the Marquise de Custine had observed that the gaoler's daughter, Louise, evinced a marked sympathy for Armand. The young man's distinction, his youth, reserve, good looks and misfortunes had captivated her. Delphine perceived how she could turn all these sentiments to account. She frankly proposed to Louise that she should assist in helping Armand to make his escape. Louise at once threw herself into the project with enthusiasm. Even before Delphine had mentioned the large sum of money that she would collect to give to her, it was arranged between the two women that on a given day Louise should accompany the marquise to the prisoner's cell as usual, and that there Armand should change into his wife's clothes and Delphine into those of Louise. When the day declined, but before the lamps were lighted, the counterfeit Louise and the so-called Marquise de Custine should leave the cell together as was their wont and gain the door, leaving Louise in the cell in place of the prisoner. Armand's medium height, his slim figure and delicate face would facilitate the substitution. To pay for such a service Delphine was sure of raising thirty thousand francs either amongst her friends or by contributing all her own small reserves.

Armand, when the scheme was submitted to him, disapproved of it; but the two women brought so much ardour, persuasion and eloquence to bear by showing the good grounds they had for belief in its success that he allowed himself to be convinced and the day of escape was fixed, while the great friend of the family, Monsieur Guy de Chaumont-Guitry, set to work to collect the thirty thousand francs in advance.

But nothing was fated to go right with Armand de Custine. On the eve of the very day chosen for the escape, the Convention issued a decree whereby any person

assisting a political prisoner to escape would suffer the penalty of death. Armand learned of this decree the next morning through the newspapers which all prisoners at La Force had the right to read. As soon as he realised that his escape might cost Louise her life, his mind was made up: he would not go.

When Delphine arrived at La Force that day, shortly before the time fixed for Armand to be carried off, she found Louise in tears because she had guessed from his attitude the young man's resolution. The two women united in a common effort to break down his scruples. "If you refuse to escape," exclaimed Delphine, weeping, "your son will be orphaned, for I too shall die."—"I beg and beseech you on my knees to flee, Monsieur; I have staked my honour, my life and my happiness on your escape," said Louise in turn, with passionate vehemence. Armand would make no reply but "I will never leave, knowing of this decree", and neither tears, supplications nor tender pleading had power to shake his resolution. The time allowed to Delphine was wasted in vain efforts, and when the wretched and disconsolate wife left the prison she found Monsieur Guy de Chaumont-Guitry at the appointed rendezvous with the horses and carriages which were to convey Armand and his family to liberty and the thirty thousand francs that friends had offered as reward to Louise.

"He refuses to escape," cried Delphine, sobbing. "I was certain he would," replied simply the friend of the de Custines.

And now the inevitable was to happen. On January the 1st, 1794, Armand de Custine was interrogated in the presence of Fouquier-Tinville by Dumas, vice-president of the Revolutionary Tribunal, assisted by his clerk, and two days later (January the 3rd, 1794) his trial began. In spite of every possible effort Delphine had been unable to obtain permission to attend. The Revolutionary Tribunal recalled the all-conquering effect of the *ci-devant's* beauty and the compassion excited

by her devotion to her father-in-law too well to run the risk of allowing her presence to influence her husband's judges.

Madame de Custine did not therefore know how clear, simple and frank were all her husband's answers, how dignified and moving his demeanour, and she was unaware that the majority of those present murmured: "He will certainly be acquitted!" At one point in the trial Dumas, incapable of finding anything against Armand de Custine, sought to obtain his condemnation on presumptive evidence only. "It is impossible," he said, "and contrary to the nature of things, that a son like you, in constant correspondence with his father, could fail to be his accomplice." Chauveau Lagarde, counsel for the defence, sprang to his feet to protest against this procedure, but neither his protestations nor the innocence of the accused could save Armand de Custine.

Sentence of death was pronounced against the son as it had been against his father, and was ordered to be carried out within twenty-four hours. The young marquis heard the sentence unmoved. He shrugged his shoulders, uttered no word, and left the court as he had entered it, with calmness and serenity.

The same evening, at nine o'clock, Delphine at last obtained permission to come and see her husband in the Conciergerie in order to bid him a last farewell. Calmly and silently they embraced each other, and sat side by side for about three hours. When they spoke it was of their concern for little Astolphe; great grief is dumb. The place where they sat served as a passage from one part of the Conciergerie to the other and also from cell to cell. Suddenly towards midnight, the door of one of these cells opened and out came an old man, himself a prisoner, whose strange night-gear was rendered still more odd by the amount of paint with which he had carefully heightened his colour. Not realising that the old man had taken this precaution in order to conceal his pallor at the guillotine on the morrow, Armand and

Delphine, whose nerves were stretched to breaking-point by the final calamities of that terrible day and also by their gloomy three hours' *tête-à-tête*, were seized, at sight of the old man, with convulsive and unnatural laughter which in Delphine's case became so hysterical, that she had to be carried out of the Conciergerie by two guards. Husband and wife were destined never to see each other again, but on the following day Armand wrote a long and noble letter filled with love.

"I am unhappy about your lot," he wrote, *inter alia*. "May it be softened, may it even some day be happy. This is one of my dearest and most ardent prayers. Teach your son to know his father, let your enlightened care protect him from vice ; as for poverty, may purity and fortitude of soul give him strength to endure it. All is over, my poor Delphine, I embrace you for the last time . . ."

Armand's death left Delphine alone in Paris with Astolphe, who had been brought back from Normandy, Nanette and a few humble friends. The young widow continued to live as simply as possible at No. 509 in the rue de Bourbon, determined to devote herself entirely to her little son, then aged three years.

But General de Custine's trial and her husband's imprisonment had brought her too much into the limelight for her to live henceforth unmolested. The Committee of Public Safety watched her with antipathy, and one day without any specific cause the commissaries of the Grenelle section arrived to search the house. They affixed seals to the finest pieces of furniture as well as to a trunk full of papers. Delphine was confined to the house and forbidden to leave it, but was allowed to receive callers. The shoe-maker at the corner of the street, one Pierre Monnecaut, was appointed guardian of the seals and house porter, with orders to keep close watch on her.

This new state of affairs decided the young widow to flee. She determined, at all costs, to avoid prison, whence so few came out alive, and to preserve her life for her child. Passing rapidly from decision to execution, she invited one of the humble friends that her beauty and charm had gained for her at La Force in the last five months when she had paid daily visits to her husband, to come and dine with her. This friend, whose name was Bertrand, had had the good fortune to be acquitted about the same time that Armand de Custine was condemned to death. Restored to liberty, he had frequently seen the marquise whom he ardently admired and for love of whom he was ready to risk his life.

So Bertrand hastened, at Delphine's bidding, to the rue de Bourbon. Madame de Custine at once informed him of her project, and Bertrand, delighted to be of service, undertook to procure her a passport, to buy, with the money which she entrusted to him, a post-chaise in which he would convey her to Germany, and to make arrangements for the departure of Nanette and Astolphe by the Strasbourg diligence.

The first part of the plan succeeded to perfection. Bertrand procured Delphine a passport which, under a false name, described her as a lace-merchant going to Belgium on business. He bought the post-chaise which he put up at the inn known as *la Maison-Blanche*, close to the barrier, and arranged the departure of Nanette with her precious burden for the same day as that of Delphine. But Madame de Custine committed the great imprudence of sending her maid to deliver to Bertrand, in small parcels, the linen, shoes, clothes and other necessaries that she was obliged to take with her for Astolphe and herself. The girl's curiosity was excited by these manœuvres. As she had detested her mistress ever since the day when Delphine reproached her for loving to feast her eyes on the executions in the Place de la Révolution, she wondered whether by opening the parcels she might not find a pretext for denouncing

her mistress. Faithful to her intuition the maid was not long in discovering that Delphine had sent to Bertrand a regular little wardrobe for herself and her son. That signified that she was preparing to go abroad, which the maid hastened to tell the Committee of Public Safety, profiting by the occasion to turn informer about Madame de Custine's friendship with Bertrand.

But the marquise and her devoted admirer, completely unaware of the denunciation that hung over them, fixed their flight for nine o'clock on the evening of the 2nd of Ventôse (February the 20th, 1794).

On that day Bertrand left his house several hours before the time of departure in order to have everything quite ready at *la Maison-Blanche* before Delphine's arrival. But, followed by the police, he was arrested, the post-chaise seized, and all the parcels which he had hidden removed from the carriage and taken to the commissary's office. In spite of everything, Madame de Custine's friend found means and presence of mind to send a message warning her of what had happened and a messenger to Nanette to stop her from leaving with Astolphe.

The nurse, informed in time, remained in Paris ; but the message never reached Madame de Custine. This was why she dressed herself as agreed in the garb of a wardrobe-dealer and utilised the last moments before going to *la Maison-Blanche* to go through her correspondence and burn all letters which might compromise her friends. Suddenly, while she was busy with this delicate task, a vigorous knock on the door of her salon made her tremble. She had only time to thrust the box containing the letters under the sofa which had a loose cover reaching to the ground, when she found herself in the presence of members of the Committee of Public Safety ! Some of them carried swords, others firearms. They seized Delphine, searched her and found on her the false passport. Simultaneously, other commissaries turned the room upside down in order to discover

more compromising documents. But, curiously enough, while they moved all the furniture in the salon and even tore up bits of the parquet flooring, it never occurred to any of them to touch the sofa or see what it might hide !

The president subjected Delphine to a long interrogation. She was obliged to confess that she knew Bertrand, but this was all that she would admit. Then she was shown what had been discovered in the carriage. They displayed before her eyes underlinen, clothes, shoes, trying to make her say that these were her property. Their efforts were powerless against her will. Realising this, one of the commissaries, a little spitfire hunchback with a grotesque face, a shoemaker by trade, took forcible hold of her foot and put on it a shoe belonging to one of the prettiest pairs that had been seized. This shoe fitted to perfection, but Delphine refused to acknowledge it as hers. The hunchback shoemaker, more and more inflamed with anger, exclaimed : " Not only is this shoe yours, but, what is more, you have committed the crime of buying your footgear from the enemy, for the shoes are made of English leather ! "—" That is possible," replied the young woman, " but as I have never ordered anything from England, you must see that these shoes cannot belong to me." Then without troubling further about the argument and perhaps to give herself more time before answering, she took pencil and paper and began drawing upon her knee. One of the commissaries stepped behind her in order to see what she was doing, and having caught sight of it, burst into a shout of laughter. On Delphine's knee was the cleverest caricature that had ever been made of the president, and by his side, perched on a chair, was the grotesque little hunchback, dangling with an air of mingled fury and desperation the shoe of English leather that the *ci-devant* would not acknowledge as hers. The sketch was seized, but he who had discovered it was never to forget it. From that moment he felt for this aristocrat,

this witty and courageous widow, a romantic admiration which, reflected in the form of deeds, was to have a profound and altogether astonishing influence on Delphine de Custine's destiny.

At the end of the interrogation, seals were affixed to all the rooms with the exception of the kitchen, and Delphine was arrested and removed to Sainte-Pélagie where she only remained for a few weeks, being then transferred to the Prison des Carmes, rue de Vaugirard.

This prison was in no way classed among those of the *Muscadins*. The men were not particular about their dress and the women manifested none of the arts of coquetry. But the food was less bad than elsewhere and more plentiful, and the gardens, which were very extensive, served as a meeting-place where men and women were free to assemble and converse, play the same games, and live a common life.

Delphine's arrival amidst these neglected surroundings created a sensation. In spite of her misfortunes Madame de Sabran's daughter had remained " the Queen of the Roses ". Her dazzling complexion and wonderful grace, her beautiful blue eyes, with their disturbing candour, the fascination of her smile, her magnificent golden hair, all these engaging and captivating charms could not leave the beholder unmoved. Her long widow's veil which she had the courage to wear notwithstanding the danger of such audacity, intensified her radiant fairness, enhancing the artist's touch of distinction which was natural to her. Not only was she deliciously and superbly lovely, but adversities and heroism added to these attractions something romantic and unique. Men who gazed at her were stirred to a keen pleasure ; women felt themselves dominated by her triumphant beauty.

Amongst those who found themselves happy to have the opportunity of admiring Madame de Custine at close quarters in Les Carmes was one who conceived for her at first sight an ardent and irresistible passion : Alexandre de Beauharnais. At that time he was only

thirty-three. Like General de Custine he had been one of the first aristocrats to defend the principles of the Revolution, and when elected deputy of Blois he showed himself an even greater liberal during his term of office than in the first revolutionary days. He fought for the Republic with the northern army, and when General de Custine left the Army of the Rhine it was Alexandre de Beauharnais who replaced him. He recaptured Mainz but refused the office of minister of war and retired to La Ferté, where he was arrested on suspicion on the 12th of Ventôse (March the 4th), year II. At Les Carmes Alexandre was later to meet his wife of whom he had lost sight for years. He found her more handsome and attractive than ever, but these facts did not lessen his ardour and admiration for Madame de Custine. Delphine on her side showed great kindness to Madame de Beauharnais when fate made the latter companion of her cell.

But the young widow succumbed to the charm of Beauharnais' passion because their exalted and hectic love was the daystar of their prison, bringing forgetfulness of their hideous position. The lovers met as often as the prison regulations permitted. When they were apart, they wrote to each other. Their passion had the strength and transports of the love that knows itself condemned to die in its springtide. They yielded themselves desperately to each other, mutually confiding in the calmer hours their secrets and their past. Delphine told how dear her brother Elzéar was to her, and Alexandre, madly in love, not only with Delphine, but also with all that she loved and admired, wrote to her in one of the letters which united them in their hours of separation: "My dear Delphine, if, as everything would seem to indicate, you survive me, and if some happy day restores you to Elzéar, speak my name to him. Tell him that he and you were in my heart in my last moments, that he was the constant subject of our conversation and that he helped us to intensify the

delights of our intimacy. Interest him in my memory by telling him how loving I was ; present me to him in the best light, so that he may keep in his heart a constant memory of the man who will cease to love you only when he ceases to breathe. Recall to mind in future days the request that I now make to you. If you grant it, I shall believe in a life eternal where I shall have the happiness of knowing that I still live on earth in the hearts of Elzéar and Delphine, the two beings most dear to me."

Unhappily this love-affair was fated to be of short duration. Robespierre's ever-growing ambition, his continual fear of seeing a rival spring up, caused him to multiply the executions. After Hébert, Fabre d'Eglantine, Camille Desmoulins, Danton and hosts of others, it was Alexandre de Beauharnais' turn to be sent to the guillotine. He was executed on the 5th of Thermidor, 1794, after a trial, during which neither the defence nor the accused had been heard, it merely sufficed to establish the identity of those who were to be thrust into the fatal tumbrel.

When she saw her lover depart for the Revolutionary Tribunal, Delphine burst into sobs of despair. He turned back to console her and slipped on her finger an Arabian ring which she kept all her life.

After Alexandre's death her life at Les Carmes was profoundly sad and depressing, but to her surprise she had not yet been summoned before the Revolutionary Tribunal. Many of the men and women who had been in prison longer than herself were now dead ; how was it that she had been spared so long ? It was, moreover, a time when the executions multiplied incessantly, and yet her name was never among those called. Several times she was taken to the rue de Bourbon to stand by while her house was searched and to answer questions, but these episodes in no way changed her lot. They did not even bring her the pleasure of embracing Astolphe whom Nanette had installed together with herself in

the kitchen, the only room to which she was able to obtain access.

Even when the fall of Robespierre, followed by the death of all the most terrible Terrorists, emptied three-quarters of the prisons, Delphine's situation remained unchanged. During those long months of the mother's captivity, an unknown friend had helped Nanette and the child to live, might he not also have had a share in keeping Delphine from the guillotine ? . . . There were times when she asked herself these questions without being able to find satisfactory answers.

It was, in fact, impossible for Madame de Custine to guess that she owed her life to one of the commissaries of the Committee of Public Safety who had come to arrest her, in fact, to the one who had discovered her caricatures of the president and the hunchback shoemaker. Seized with admiration, as much for the young woman's courage and talent as for her radiant beauty, he had endeavoured, at all costs, to save her and those whom she loved, from death.

This man, by name Jérôme, was a master-mason and a staunch Republican, but he had a feeling and loyal heart. He had, in the guise of loans, handed over to Nanette the money to buy necessities for herself and Astolphe and he had saved Delphine by arranging, to suit his own ends, the prisoners' dossiers deposited with Fouquier-Tinville. Jérôme had free access to these papers which were placed in a box on the public prosecutor's desk. Each fresh dossier which arrived had to be placed beneath the others so that the prisoners were sentenced in chronological order of their arrival in prison. Every morning the top ones were taken for the day's trials. From February to July, namely, from the 2nd of Ventôse to the 9th of Thermidor, Jérôme consistently arranged Madame de Custine's dossier amongst the last few so that its turn to be taken might never arrive. It was thanks to this stratagem that Delphine lived to see the 9th of Thermidor.

But with the advent of that date Jérôme's power to protect Madame de Custine was annihilated. Those who fell on that day of reaction against Robespierre's dictatorship were Jérôme's friends, and the master-mason was forced to hide in order not to be involved in the executions which severed the heads of Maximilien Robespierre, of his brother, of Couthon, Fouquier-Tinville, Saint-Just, Dumas, in a word the whole phalanx of Robespierrists.

But if the isolation of Armand de Custine's widow was more complete after Thermidor than in the most bloody moments of the Terror, if the numerous aristocrats who were imprisoned at the same time as Delphine, such as Thérèsia Cabarrus, Mesdames de Beauharnais, d'Aiguillon, de Lameth and many others, were now free ; if Madame de Custine's name was excluded from these lists of the liberated with the same persistence as erstwhile from those prepared for the Conciergerie, on the other hand, the rules of her prison and of the others in Paris had become much more humane.

Madame de Custine could now see Nanette and have news of Astolphe, which, unfortunately, was not good. The child had suffered from repeated attacks of a pernicious fever which would have carried him off, had it not been for his nurse's care and devotion, but he was just beginning to be convalescent. At last Delphine was able to lay plans with Nanette, and make use of the servant's goodwill and faithfulness in an effort to pave the way for her release.

The de Custine family had always been beloved at Nidervilers where the workpeople at their factory had unanimously declared them excellent employers. Ever since the confiscation of the factory, together with all the other property belonging to the general and his son, many of the workmen had come to Paris to seek employment, and with these Nanette was in touch because her own father was among their number. She conceived the idea of getting all these men to sign a

petition for the Marquise de Custine's release. Delphine, who warmly approved of the idea, told Nanette what to do, and very soon after the plan had been mooted Nanette, proud and happy, delivered in person to Legendre, an ex-butcher and now the dispenser of liberty to prisoners, the petition in favour of Astolphe's mother. It was black with the signatures of all the survivors from amongst the former workmen of Nidervilers. Some had even added simple and emphatic expressions of their affection for all the members of the de Custine family.

But Legendre was much more interested in good wine and perfumed and stimulating beverages than in petitions in favour of prisoners. He threw the petition brought by Nanette into a box where it might have lain for long enough had it not been for a fortuitous event.

This was the visit of three of Legendre's young employees to their master one evening in Vendémiaire (October) after partaking of an excellent dinner. These young men expected to find Legendre at home, but the inspector of petitions had gone out on the spree, and they waited for hours before he returned. Then one of them declared he would be avenged for the long wait by making Legendre sign such petition for liberty as he, his paid hand, should choose at will. For this purpose the audacious fellow went to Legendre's desk without even carrying a light. Gropingly he laid hands on one of the petitions in the box which he was unable to read before returning to the room where his companions awaited him.

The young men were delighted when they saw that this petition begged for the release of Madame de Custine. "Bravo!" cried all three, "let us give the beautiful Custine, our second Madame Roland, her liberty."

When Legendre returned home at one o'clock in the morning, he was so intoxicated that he could be made to do anything. He signed, in high good spirits, the petition that his employee presented to him without knowing, of course, what he was signing.

Directly they had obtained Legendre's signature the three young men went to Les Carmes, penetrated the building and dashed to Delphine's cell to announce the good news. But Delphine emphatically refused to open her door and follow strangers at so late an hour of the night.

No whit discouraged, however, they returned to the door of her cell on the following morning at ten o'clock, and in their company Madame de Custine left, on the morning of the 17th of Vendémiaire (the 9th of October), 1794, this prison where she had remained eight months and eleven days and known the transports of the most burning and exalted passion as well as the extremest depths of fear and heavy burden of melancholy and solitude.

Delphine at once directed her steps to her house where she knew she should find Astolphe and Nanette. The child's state was a sore distress to her. Subject once more to attacks of his malignant fever the poor little creature was deaf and half unconscious. The emotion caused by the sight of her son's condition, the sufferings of imprisonment, the anxiety of her present situation, the uncertainty of the future, the total lack of resources, all these evils weighing simultaneously upon her, shook her once splendid health, and she who had, even at Les Carmes, deservedly borne the name of "Queen of the Roses" fell a victim to a very serious attack of jaundice.

For nearly five months the newly liberated prisoner was forced to keep her bed, incapable of any decisions. She was indeed so ill that she never even asked whence came the money which enabled Nanette to feed her and the child and to get food herself. Not until Madame de Custine was well on the road to convalescence did Nanette confess that for the last six months Jérôme, still in hiding lest he should be pursued, had nevertheless arranged that Nanette should receive all the money she needed.

Astolphe's mother was profoundly touched by Jérôme's

devotion, by his kind heart, his discretion and the disinterestedness with which he had served her. She would have liked to make a friend of this master mason whose sentiments and actions were so noble. But Jérôme, while appreciating her desire, always refused to be treated as an equal. " We are not people of the same education," he used to say when Delphine insisted on behaving to him as though he were one of the family. But she was able to render him the signal service of assisting his departure to America where he made the small fortune with which he returned to France under the Consulate.

Madame de Sabran did not learn of her daughter's liberty until the month of November, 1794. The news was a source of profound joy to her, and she at once sought means to see her child again as soon as might be and induce her to stay in Prussia. But Delphine who had already begun to take steps to put little Astolphe in possession of his father's and grandfather's property, feared that a long absence might jeopardise her chance of success. A journey to Switzerland was, however, arranged for her by her mother's cousin, the Chevalier Maurice de Séguier, and after so many bereavements, vicissitudes, dangers and agitations the two women and Elzéar met at last in Zurich. Nanette and little Astolphe went meanwhile to Nidervilers, there to await Madame de Custine's return to Paris.

Madame de Sabran's great desire and secret hope was to keep her daughter with her. Elzéar also strongly urged his sister not to return to France, but despite all her misfortunes, Delphine had remained a Republican and wanted to go on living there with her son. Madame de Sabran's counsels, apprehensions and entreaties were of no avail against this project any more than were Elzéar's affectionate remonstrances. Delphine, on the contrary, would have liked to persuade her mother to return to France, which caused Maurice de Séguier to write to Madame de Sabran : " I beseech you to take

care, Madame . . . as soon as you see this alluring daughter of yours she will talk to you with her sweet voice, her words will be accompanied by such glances from her adorable eyes, and her arguments will appear so cogent coming from her pretty mouth, that you will allow yourself to be persuaded" (16th September, 1795). Madame de Sabran, however, resisted Delphine's arguments and did no more than accompany her son in escorting Madame de Custine as far as Bâle.

On her return to France, Delphine took Astolphe and Nanette to Lorraine and returned with them to Paris, until the spring, which, together with the summer, she spent that year at Nidervilers.

But the winter of 1797 found her overwhelmingly occupied in striving to save what she could of the de Custines' property as well as that of her mother and of Monseigneur de Sabran. The enterprise was both thankless and onerous, and Delphine, alone, faced with numerous and complicated difficulties, found herself adrift, isolated and helpless. She regretted the time of Armand de Custine's sure and devoted friendship; maybe, even that of her fiery passion for Alexandre de Beauharnais. She quailed before the vision of an old age without a partner to share her hearth; of long years of solitude, of a life that would contain maternal love only. Her passionate nature and lively imagination, her whole personality, active and quivering with life, recoiled from the prospect of this dead-alive existence with a greater agitation than the events of the Terror had ever inspired in her gallant soul. In a word, from 1797 onwards, Delphine longed to marry again. The jocular way in which she speaks of such a possibility to Madame de Sabran might deceive us and make it appear that the idea occurred to her as a capricious and passing fancy. "Yes, find me a rich old husband. How crestfallen Médor looks when I talk of my plans and what a face Maurice would pull. But do not tease him unnecessarily" (January 12th, 1797). In reality, this desire

for marriage became a painful and lasting preoccupation. " What will become of me, Mother, when my best friends are gone ? Shall I always be alone ? I have a son whom I adore but whom Fate will remove from my side. Farewell then to admirers and friends ; books, brushes, ink and paper will be my last resources. I shall be of no use to anyone. If instead of this I can find a good man like Merkatz, I will devote my life to him. I will marry him for fear someone else may snatch him."

Unfortunately, in spite of two good opportunities, Delphine's great desire to marry again remained unrealised, and it was a passion destined to torture her for twenty years that took the place of the marriage which might have brought her happiness.

One of the marriages in which she would probably have found love, fortune and joy was with General Beurnonville. In payment of the eighty thousand francs which it owed him, the nation had presented the general with Madame de Sabran's delightful and handsome house in the rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, which had been confiscated. On account of this grant, Delphine was obliged to meet the general several times and he fell a victim to her charms. So fascinated was he that he asked direct for her hand, imploring her not to refuse him. Delphine laughed, but was touched by this method of approach and forced to admit that the general was not altogether unpleasing to her. True, he was only the son of a wheelwright in the neighbourhood of Bar-sur-Aube, but he had shown himself valiant, was no fool, was possessed of a fortune and had a really good heart notwithstanding his jovial and audacious boastfulness. To crown all, he had just been appointed ambassador to Berlin.

Madame de Custine considered all these points in his favour and informed Madame de Sabran of the offer, giving her to understand that the general was not antipathetic to her. Madame de Sabran was content to advise extreme prudence, but Elzéar fell into a perfect

state of fury at the mere thought of such a marriage and fought it tooth and nail. Monseigneur de Sabran supported Elzéar, and Delphine realised that no one in the family would approve if she were to marry General Beurnonville.

But the general left nothing undone to find favour in Delphine's eyes. He knew how great was the bond of affection between Madame de Custine and her mother, and therefore took advantage of his position at the French Embassy at Berlin to strike the name of Madame de Sabran, now the Marquise de Boufflers, off the list of *émigrés*, together with that of her husband, the marquis, and of Elzéar, her son.

But the merit of this great service which the general had just rendered to Delphine's family did not prevent Elzéar's opinion from prevailing.

" I have received your letter of the 10th of December, my dear Elzéar," wrote Delphine to her brother about the 20th of December, 1799, " and I agree with everything you have seen fit, at the dictates of your affection, to write."

Maurice de Séguier would also have liked to marry Delphine to whom he was sincerely attached, but she disliked his manners, his exactions, his way of making love, and rejected him as she had Beurnonville, only to fall a victim shortly afterwards to the seduction of the greatest charmer of the age who was also the most tyrannical and selfish of lovers.

However, before embarking upon the torments of this romantic passion, Delphine had the great happiness of seeing all her family in France and enjoying the delight of their beloved presence in the winter of 1800.

The man with whom she was about to fall in love was the perfect type of romantic hero. He was handsome, melancholy and incapable of living without passion. Only love had power to lift him out of the incurable and immense *ennui* which, he declared, weighed him down. René de Chateaubriand, for he it was whom Delphine

was to love in a manner at once volcanic and profoundly devoted, was about thirty-five when he renewed with Madame de Custine an acquaintance which had begun before the Terror when she spent her time so gaily in the society of the Marquis and Marquise de Chateaubriand and of the La Rochefoucaulds.

At that time the Vicomte de Chateaubriand was the most admired man in France. Handsome, with " shining eyes ", lips whose beauty lent poetry to the whole face, a heroic air that some, however, declared to be spoilt by too round a back, he could, at will, inspire passion in all the women whom he visited or met in society.

His past was enshrouded in legend and romance. Born at Saint-Malo, a land of fairies and madonnas, on the 14th of September, 1768, he passed his childhood in the gloomy and majestic Château de Combourg, going in fear of a father whose voice made him tremble and at whose step Madame de Chateaubriand was agitated to the point of swooning. His sister Lucille, only one year older than himself, had lent to his early years the warmth of an admiring and enthusiastic friendship. As an *émigré* in England, he taught French for a living under the name of Monsieur Shatterbrains at Brighthy's school near Beccles. Happening one day to fall victim to an accident while riding on horseback past the gate of an Anglican clergyman, Mr. Yves, he was taken in by the family and tended like a son. After his recovery he fled like a malefactor in order to avoid marriage with the charming Charlotte Yves, who was madly in love with him but whom he could not marry as he had already been married to Mademoiselle Céleste de Lavigne-Buisson since March 1792. Chateaubriand also fought in Condé's army and in 1801 published his novel *Atala* which turned all heads. This work cast a halo at once round Chateaubriand's genius and his person. The story went that it was the viscount's autobiography, and the misfortunes of this man so young, so full of fire, such a genius and already so sorely tried, supplied the

very food of compassion. All the salons clamoured to be graced by the brilliant author's presence.

Among these salons was one where he soon reigned supreme in ascendancy and charm. It was the one in the rue Neuve du Luxembourg presided over by the languorous charm of the Comtesse de Beaumont, daughter of Louis XVI's unfortunate minister, Monsieur de Montmorin de Saint-Hérem. Madame de Beaumont was almost immediately subjugated by Chateaubriand. Soon she lived only for him and devoted herself entirely to his work and well-being.

Under the influence of this sweet and adorable woman, " the swallow " as she was christened by her numerous friends, Chateaubriand wrote, in the subtle and ideal atmosphere which she created around him, *Le Génie du Christianisme*, the success of which almost equalled that of *Atala*.

And yet this man of *grandes passions* had already begun to tire a little of a woman so delicate, frail, sentimental and ethereal as Pauline de Beaumont. It was because in 1802 he had met again in society his sister-in-law's former friend, the splendid Madame de Custine.

Chateaubriand was dazzled by the radiance, the complexion, the golden hair of Armand de Custine's incomparable widow, by her sprightliness, wit, talent and distinction. All trace of the sorrows with which the Revolution had overwhelmed her were effaced. Delphine, at the age of thirty-three, was as young-looking as she had ever been since reaching womanhood and even more beautiful. Her attractions were heightened by past misfortunes. To have snapped one's fingers at the Terrorists, inspired boundless devotion amongst the *sans-culottes*, braved the scaffold in order to cheer her father-in-law and husband, were acts of heroism and poise which inflamed René de Chateaubriand's poetic imagination. He dreamed also of the royal blood that flowed in Delphine's veins, of her power to create masterpieces with the brush and of the intoxicating happiness

of love between two artists. That happiness he determined to win.

Delphine felt for Chateaubriand the same attraction, enthusiasm and admiration as the author of *Atala* felt for her. So from the beginning of the year 1803 Madame de Custine had nothing more to refuse Chateaubriand and adored " the god " with the same devoted passion as Pauline de Beaumont.

At that particular moment Chateaubriand carried on at one and the same time the intrigue of his languishing love for Madame de Beaumont and that of his ardent passion for Delphine de Custine. He revelled, moreover, in this entanglement of adventures which aggrandised him in his own eyes and lent itself to mystery and complications. He watched with complacency his sufferings in his numerous love-affairs. Thus it was that when appointed secretary to the embassy at Rome at the beginning of the summer of 1803, he invited Madame de Custine and Madame de Beaumont in turn to join him there. He urged them both, and if deep down in his heart it was the dazzling Madame de Custine whom he desired to welcome to Rome, he pressed Madame de Beaumont so persistently that she gradually came to regard the journey as possible.

Delphine, too, took a further step, but it was merely to go to the Hôtel d'Etampes, rue Saint-Honoré, to visit " The Enchanter " in his room.

Chateaubriand was so charmed and dazzled by this dear visit that, transported with joy, he wrote next day to his beautiful caller : " Another day without seeing you ! You will pass it tranquilly, painting, teasing Trim, oblivious of the fact that there is someone in the world who loves you. My cell is very dreary : a feeble sun in a cloudy sky, a cold wind, a room stripped of its furniture and crying aloud my departure. A few days ago I should have been indifferent to all this, but a blessed apparition came to visit me and since then separation has become intolerable."

However, he set out and arrived at Rome on the 25th of June, 1803, while Madame de Beaumont, although very ill, made plans for joining him. She in turn left Paris for Italy and, accompanied by Chateaubriand, who had gone to meet her at the station frontier, arrived at Rome in the early days of October.

Delphine, profoundly unhappy at the departure of her hero, went to Plombière in July in search of fortitude. On her return from thence she took Astolphe to the Marquise de Boufflers at Saint-Léger and remained with her mother until the end of the autumn.

At that time, Madame de Custine had, thanks to Fouché, recovered almost all the confiscated de Custine property as well as her own, and found herself splendidly equipped as regards fortune. She determined to use the capital of which she was mistress to buy in the delightful valley of Lisieux the Château de Fervaques, famous for the visits which Henri IV had paid to it when he was passionately in love with the lady of the house.

The negotiations were lengthy and difficult, but Delphine brought them to a successful issue and the deed of sale was signed on the 27th of October, 1803. Madame de Custine had become mistress of the Château de Fervaques for a sum of 478,764 francs and an annual rent of 8,691 francs.

At Rome, the Comtesse de Beaumont's illness had made such rapid strides that within three weeks of her arrival, on the 4th of November, she died towards the evening, having confessed before her departure that she wished to die "in order to be more discreet than her love". Chateaubriand manifested a noisy and ostentatious grief. He wished to pay her such honours as should proclaim him to all the world as the most generous and perfect of lovers.

He therefore caused her to be interred in the church of Saint-Louis des Français at Rome and determined to build over her remains a splendid tomb. But he had not the necessary means, and thereupon found it quite

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natural to ask Madame de Custine to furnish it! . . . Delphine, however, did not view the situation in the same light as René and declined to send the money.

Nevertheless, "the god" did not immediately visit his displeasure for this refusal upon his lady-love whom, on the contrary, he was feverishly impatient to see again and envelop in his affections. On his return to Paris in the February of 1804, recalled by the minister to whom he had written that Rome had become a place of torture to him since Madame de Beaumont's death, Chateaubriand made more ardent advances than ever before to Madame de Custine.

True, at this time Madame de Chateaubriand was living with her husband for the first time in her life. But Delphine had nothing to fear from this unhappy wife, the victim of her husband's selfishness, whose charms, talents and wit, which were considerable whatever may be said to the contrary, had never been appreciated by her husband.

This was Delphine's period of greatest happiness; Chateaubriand and she saw each other constantly, interchanging plans and ideas. She believed that at last "the genius" belonged to her; she thought herself necessary to his happiness and her adoration gave birth to the illusion that he loved her as she loved him. Like Pauline de Beaumont, Delphine paraded her love for René instead of hiding it. She was proud that the world should know of the ties that united them; that she had had the happiness of being chosen by "the god", that their hearts beat in unison. . . . She even introduced Chateaubriand to her family, and for love of her daughter the Marquise de Boufflers received this lover with cordiality, regard and enthusiastic compliments such as he loved. But Chateaubriand on his return from his visit to Madame de Boufflers remarked that "the years and exile had made a wreck of the marquise".

Delphine did still more for Chateaubriand. She left her house in the rue Martel to instal herself in a flat

situated at the corner of the rue Verte and the rue Miromesnil, exactly opposite the residence of the man whom she loved. This was the time when Chateaubriand called Delphine "his fairy, his inspiration, his star". But even this period was not free from suffering. "The god" was often morose, sour and exacting. He must be continually extolled and no one else might be complimented in his presence. The antipathy which he cherished for Elzéar de Sabran arose from the fact that all round him he heard praises of Delphine's brother, who was held in high esteem. Altogether Chateaubriand liked to criticise and never found occasion to praise. Then Delphine was so much under his ascendancy, she loved him with such adoration that the lover liked to try his power, to assure himself that with Madame de Custine he could take any and every liberty.

This was one of the reasons why he soon fell into the habit of tormenting and hectoring his mistress. From the second year of their love onwards he subjected her to a desolating harshness as he would never have ventured had he not felt Delphine to be deeply enamoured and incapable of opposing her will to that of the man who was her god.

In the month of May, 1804, Madame de Custine was harrowed at the idea of leaving Paris for Fervaques because Chateaubriand was remaining in the capital. She took comfort, however, in the thought of writing much and often to him, even more frequently than to her mother, and receiving in reply letters which would console her for the separation. A first reply arrived at Fervaques, bright and amusing, but already on the 18th of June he expressed his disapprobation of the ceremony of Astolphe's first communion of which Delphine had given him a spirited account. In a surly and pedantic tone he wrote, *inter alia*, to the astonished mother: "You have forced your son to go through this ceremony when he does not observe the simple commandments of Friday and perhaps does not even go to mass on

Sunday." This kill-joy letter ended with the words: "Expect me at Fervaques towards the end of July."

For Madame de Custine this time of waiting was full of feverish excitement, fears, impatience and intense desire to have everything perfect for the arrival of the great man. But before the end of July Chateaubriand threatened to break with her under pretext that she had betrayed the secret of Pauline de Beaumont's tomb. He arrived, however, on the 22nd of August, and Madame de Custine, transported with joy, laid castle, live-stock and servants at Chateaubriand's feet.

The hero occupied the room in which Henri IV had slept in the days of his *amour* with the lady of Fervaques; Delphine created around him a court of friends and admirers, everything was done to distract and please, all of which, nevertheless, failed to prevent his being overwhelmed by *ennui*. He left Fervaques on the 29th of August, wrote on the 3rd of September to Madame de Custine that he missed everything he had had there, but he had no desire to recall their conversations, their moments of joy, everything on which Delphine had hoped that he would dwell.

Chateaubriand paid a second visit to Fervaques at the end of October and this made still less for Delphine's happiness than the first. One day "the god" was so taciturn, so indifferent to the charms of his mistress, to all that she desired and felt that in a fit of desperation she had thoughts of taking her life. Armed with the gun with which Chateaubriand had gone shooting that very morning Delphine owed her life only to her lack of knowledge of the weapon.

She had entered upon this life of sorrow, through the doorway of her love for Chateaubriand. For twenty years Delphine de Custine was to love Chateaubriand with a devouring passion, soon to be exacerbated by a jealousy which ended by bringing her to her grave.

As for Chateaubriand, after having loved and admired Delphine de Custine with ardour, he rapidly reached

the point of showing her no more than an affectionate condescension ; he had quickly dominated and tyrannised over her, and tiring of her soon afterwards, he resorted to a ruse before his final withdrawal. Thus one day he used the pretext of a journey to Fervaques to meet a new mistress in Normandy. On his return from this escapade he pretended that he had not reached Fervaques because business had recalled him half-way. It was the first step towards the rupture that Chateaubriand's voyage to the East was to render final.

On the 1st of August, 1807, " the god " departed with great pomp on a visit to the East. He returned via Spain from this romantic voyage in the May of 1808 having achieved the *dénouement* which had been his goal when embarking on such an undertaking. He had desired to captivate the heart and imagination of Nathalie de Noailles, Duchesse de Mouchy, by this *quasi* fabulous adventure. He had succeeded : the beautiful duchess awaited him on his return, as he had asked, in the Hall of Lions at the Alhambra ; it was their first rendezvous.

Henceforth, Chateaubriand only recalled the passion he had had for Madame de Custine when he wished her to render him a service. Delphine, on the contrary, always loved Chateaubriand, continued her kindnesses to him and was of service to him whenever possible, either directly or through friends. But this unhappy passion impaired her health and weakened her heart. Her lungs also became affected and she was obliged to travel in order to try and regain her strength.

Her son Astolphe caused her anxiety, too. He was pale and thin. Her whole world seemed to be crumbling about the unhappy woman, for to her illness and many cares was one day added the grief of hearing of Elzéar's imprisonment. He was soon set at liberty, but was exiled from Paris.

Then it was her dear Astolphe who was called to the flag in 1813. " I am overwhelmed with grief, anxiety and despair," she wrote to her mother on learning these

tidings. However, her mother love once more gave her strength to resist and with great difficulty she succeeded in buying him a substitute. Thus he escaped taking part in Napoleon's terrible campaigns ; but at the Congress of Vienna in 1814 he was, with his friend, Alexis de Noailles, attached to Talleyrand's person in the king's service.

Unfortunately, there was something disquieting, a little morbid and lacking in stability in Astolphe's character. He adored his mother, and yet was unable, even for love of her, to bring himself to do regular and settled work.

Delphine hoped that his marriage with the charming Mademoiselle Léontine de Saint-Simon on the 12th of May, 1821, would give her son the qualities which he still lacked. But this marriage was to be the source of fresh sorrow. The young wife, who had always been very delicate, died on the 7th of July, 1823, aged twenty, leaving her husband a son, the little Enguerrand de Custine.

Delphine, already so sorely tried, was deeply affected by the death of her daughter-in-law. But she plucked up courage again to procure for her son and herself the only compensation which could help to console them, namely, a peerage for Astolphe. Chateaubriand assisted Madame de Custine on this occasion and their united efforts were about to be crowned with success when a scandal, of which Astolphe was the wretched hero, crushed this hope for ever. Shortly after, on the 2nd of January, 1826, little Enguerrand died at the age of four, after an illness of two months, during which a despairing Delphine fought death inch by inch for the life of the child she adored.

Madame de Custine emerged from this succession of misfortunes a physical and moral wreck. The doctors and her son were anxious that she should leave the place where she had just suffered so much in order to try and regain her health on the shores of the Lake of Geneva.

She let them have their way and left unresistingly that Château de Fervaques where she had spent whole years of mourning and solitude, the house whose bitter-sweet charm she loved ; that recalled the dreams and illusions of her prime ; the house where she had still invited Chateaubriand after she had fallen from favour.

Chateaubriand, informed of Madame de Custine's journey, went to meet her and spent some hours with her at the Hôtel d'Angleterre at Sécherons, near Geneva. " I have seen," he wrote of this last interview, " the woman who confronted the scaffold with so great a courage, looking whiter than one of the Fates, dressed in black, her figure wasted by the hand of death, her head adorned only by her silky hair, her pale lips parted in a smile that showed her lovely teeth."

Delphine de Custine died at Bex, at the Hôtel de l'Union, on the 25th of July, 1826, aged fifty-six. The day before she had been out driving and nothing foreshadowed so sudden a death : the Swiss doctor had, indeed, hoped to cure her. She who had been so brilliant and triumphant died quite peacefully without appearing to suffer. Her son caused her to be brought back to Fervaques, where she rests between her grandson and her daughter-in-law in the humble churchyard of Saint-Aubin, perched on the hill overlooking the rose-red Château of Fervaques.

The Marquise de Boufflers, her mother, who had loved her so dearly, survived her by six months, but was unable to be present at her funeral.

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